THE PLEASURE OF DRAWING

Kyoto, 1966. The young Hamaguchi is working for a textile manufacturer whilst dreaming of becoming an artist, when an incident at the zoo involving the boss's daughter forces his hand. He moves to Tokyo at the invitation of an old school friend who also arranges an "interview" at the studios of the famous mangaka, Shiro Kondo. Here he quickly discovers both the long hours of meeting studio deadlines along with the nightlife and artistic haunts of the capital.

For the first time ever, multi-award winning Taniguchi recalls his beginnings in manga and his youth spent in Tokyo in the 60's. It is a magnificent account of his apprenticeship where all the finesse and elegance of the creator are united to illustrate those first emotions of adulthood.

Praise for Taniguchi's work:

**** Kevin Church, About com
". . Taniguchi's careful compositions…achieve a contemplative beauty." Andrew D. Arnold, Time.com
". . an incredible book . ." Ed Sizemore, Manga Worth Reading
". . we'd all be the poorer without Taniguchi's delicate and beautiful comic creations." Greg McElhatton, Read About Comics
". . an absolute page-flipper that had me literally holding my breath." Zack Davisson, Japan Reviewed

USD 23.00 GBP 12.99
ISBN 978-1-908007 04-9
9 781908 007049
www.ponentmon.com

JIRO TANIGUCHI

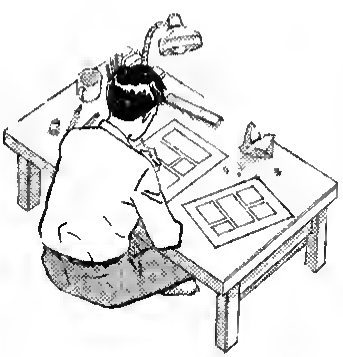
ZOO IN WINTER

JIR WINTER

FANFARE·PONENT MON

A ZOO IN WINTER

JIRO TANIGUCHI



FANFARE · PONENT MON

FUYU NO DÔBUTSUEN
© Jiro TANIGUCHI, 2008
© Ponent Mon, 2011 for the English edition
English translation rights arranged with Jiro TANIGUCHI,
through le BUREAU DES COPYRIGHTS FRANÇAIS, Tokyo.

www.ponentmon.com

Fanfare
P.o. Box 114
Wisbech, PE13 4WF
England

Translation:
Kumar Sivasubramanian

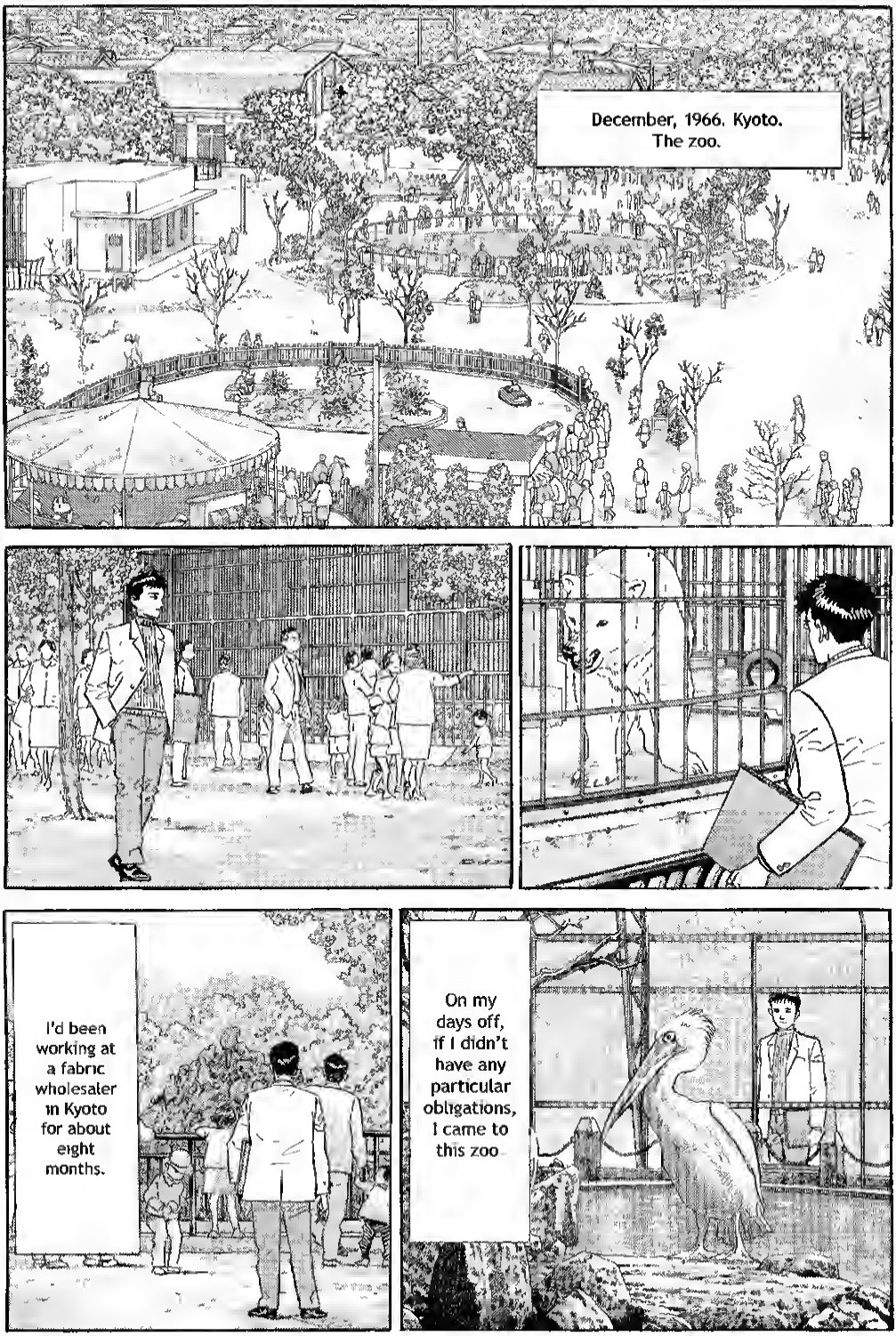
Graphic adaptation and layout:
Sly Wind Tidings

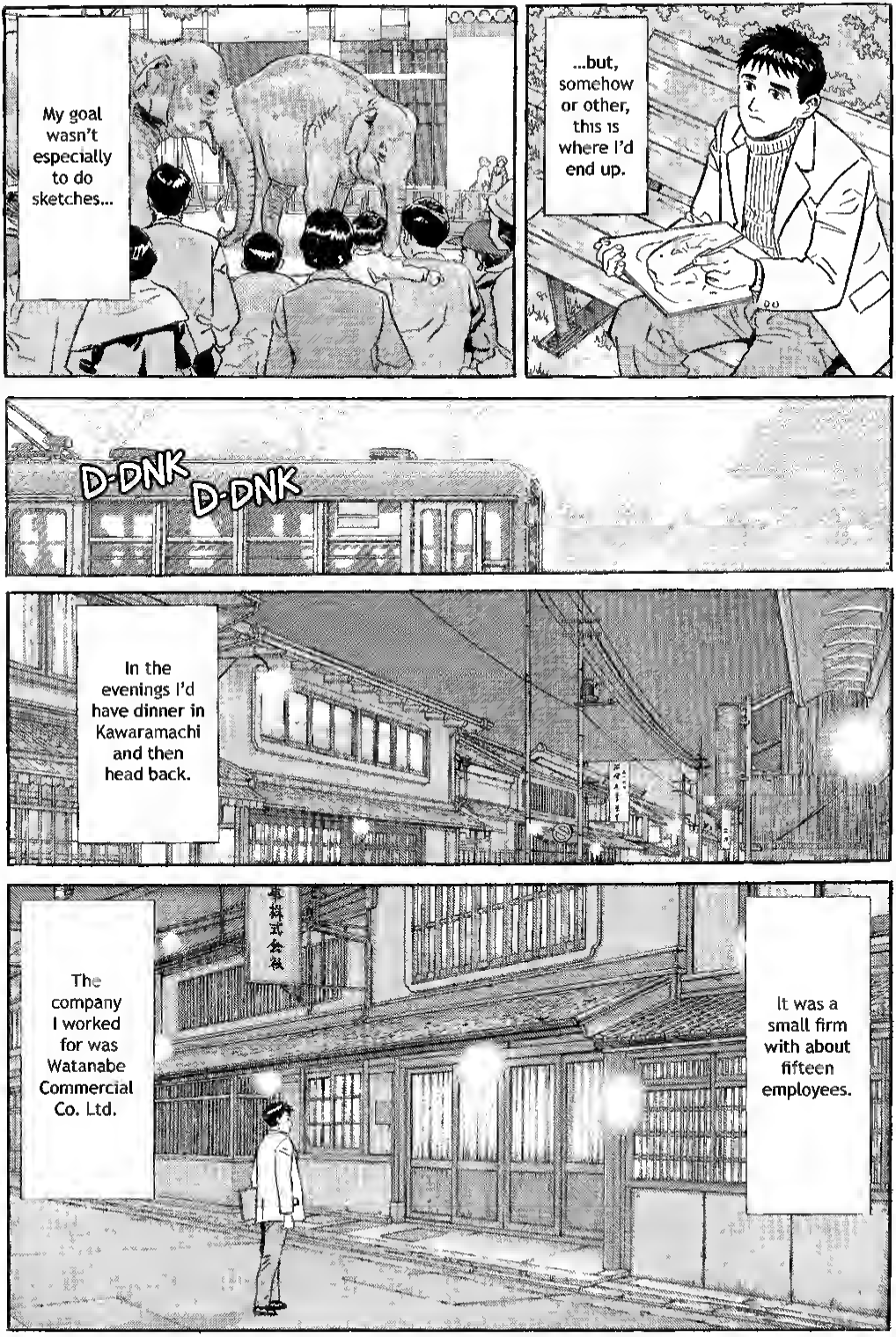
ISBN: 978-1-908007-04-9

Printed and bound in China

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, without the prior written permission of the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser

Chapter 1
A Zoo In Winter


December, 1966. Kyoto.
The zoo.
I'd been working at a fabric wholesaler in Kyoto for about eight months.
On my days off, if I didn't have any particular obligations, I came to this zoo

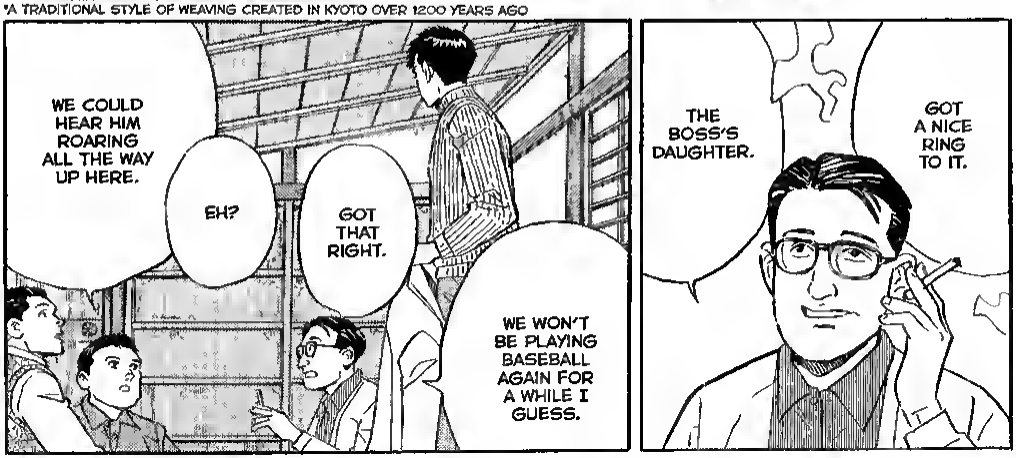

My goal wasn't especially to do sketches...
...but, somehow or other, this is where I'd end up.
D-DNK D-DNK
In the evenings I'd have dinner in Kawaramachi and then head back.
The company I worked for was Watanabe Commercial Co. Ltd.
It was a small firm with about fifteen employees.

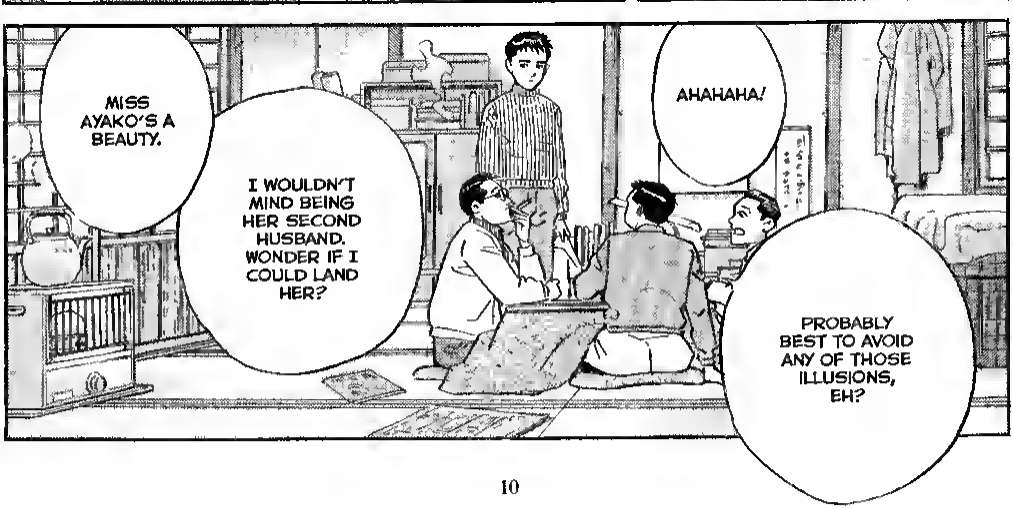
CLIC
OH!
GOOD EVENING, MA'AM.
WELL!
WELCOME BACK.
DO YOU HAVE GUESTS?
YES, SORT OF...
...BUT, HAVE YOU EATEN, HAMAGUCHI?
YES THANKS, I ATE WHILE I WAS OUT.
OH, WELL EVERYBODY ELSE'S BACK ALREADY.
What was going on...?
It was extremely rare to find the boss's wife still in the kitchen with Nobuko, the help, at this hour.

I was living, together with three more senior employees, in a converted second floor storehouse of the company building.
CREAK
CREAK
It was at the back of a narrow, deep building characteristic of old downtown Kyoto houses.
I'M BACK!
OH!
YOU'RE PRETTY LATE.
WENT TO THE ZOO BY YOURSELF AGAIN, OIO YOU?
YOU'RE SO FERVENT, HAMAGUCHI, ALWAYS CARRYING YOUR SKETCH BOOK AROUND.
NO, I'M NOT AT ALL.
I'VE JUST GOT NOTHING ELSE TO DO.
THEN JOIN OUR TEAM.
WE'RE STILL SHORT ON PLAYERS.
HM?
ABOUT WHAT?
ABOUT THE BOSS'S DAUGHTER.
OH! MORE IMPORTANTLY, YOU WON'T HAVE HEARO YET, WILL YOU HAMAGUCHI?

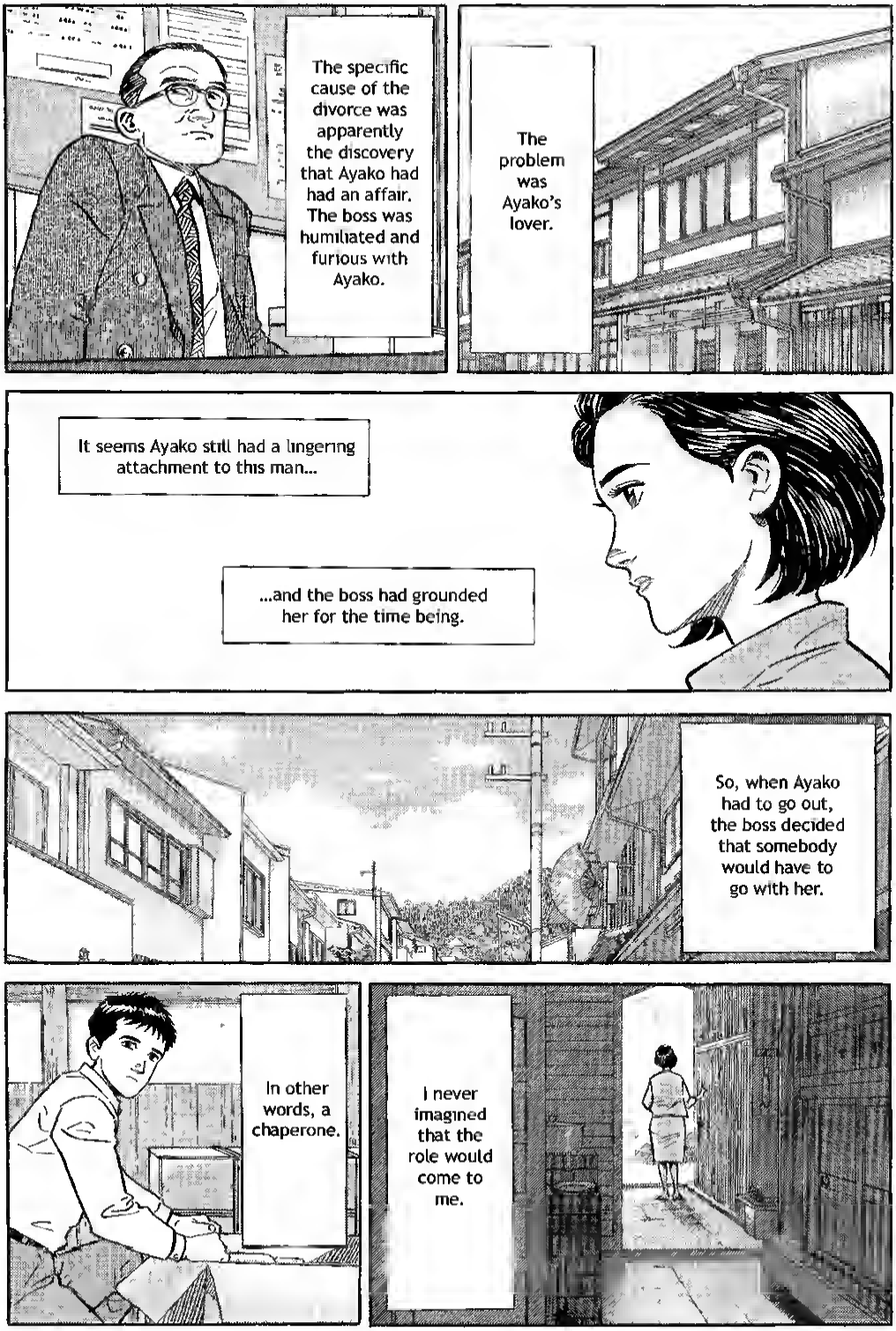
SHE'S BACK HOME.
SHE WAS MARRIED INTO THE FAMOUS ORIMOTO FAMILY OF NISHIJIN* TEXTILE MAKERS.
...
SEEMS HE'S GIVEN HER THE ELBOW.
SSRP
THE BOSS IS FUMING!
SERIOUSLY PISSED!

*A TRADITIONAL STYLE OF WEAVING CREATED IN KYOTO OVER 1200 YEARS AGO


WE COULD HEAR HIM ROARING ALL THE WAY UP HERE.
EH?
GOT THAT RIGHT.
WE WON'T BE PLAYING BASEBALL AGAIN FOR A WHILE I GUESS.
THE BOSS'S DAUGHTER.
GOT A NICE RING TO IT.


MISS AYAKO'S A BEAUTY.
I WOULDN'T MIND BEING HER SECOND HUSBAND. WONDER IF I COULD LAND HER?
AHAHAHA!
PROBABLY BEST TO AVOID ANY OF THOSE ILLUSIONS, EH?

Several days later.
I kept hearing murmured rumors here and there in the company...
...and somehow the facts of the divorce came to light.
The boss's only daughter, Miss Ayako, had gotten married two years earlier.
She had wedded the eldest son and heir to the Orimoto family, long-established Nishijin fabric makers.
The marriage was decided on according to the wishes of the parents, but the two did not get on well, it seems.


The specific cause of the divorce was apparently the discovery that Ayako had had an affair. The boss was humiliated and furious with Ayako.
The problem was Ayako's lover.
It seems Ayako still had a lingering attachment to this man...
...and the boss had grounded her for the time being.
So, when Ayako had to go out, the boss decided that somebody would have to go with her.
In other words, a chaperone.
I never imagined that the role would come to me.

HEY!
HAMA-GUCHI!
COULD YOU MAKE A DELIVERY FOR ME?
MARUFUJI DEPARTMENT STORE IN KAWARAMACHI.
SURE.
HERE'S THE DELIVERY NOTE.
THANKS.
Watanabe Commercial was a firm that manufactured and wholesaled various cloth accessories like neckties and scarves.
My main duty at that time...
...was picking up merchandise ordered from the manu-facturing facility...
...and delivering the goods to retail stores.
But the truth is there was another job that I wanted so much more.

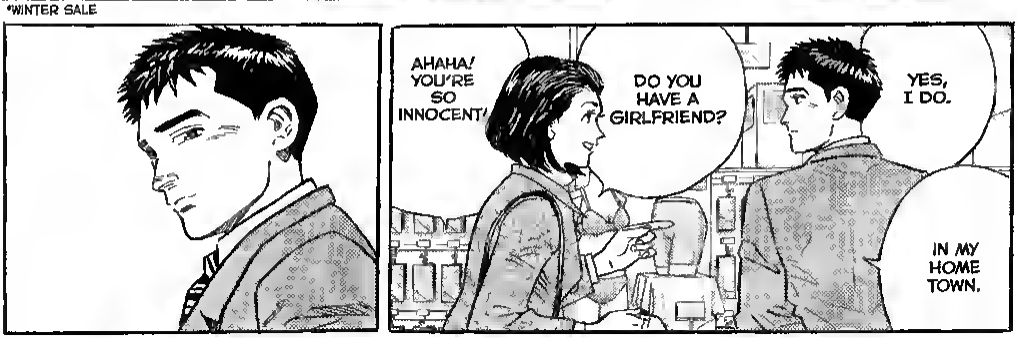
SORTED!
BAM
ALL RIGHT, SEE YOU SOON.
OH! PLEASE WAIT A MOMENT!
...?
UHH...
IF YOU'RE GOING TO A DEPARTMENT STORE....
...TAKE ME WITH YOU. I NEED TO DO SOME SHOPPING.
ER... BOSS?
YES, PLEASE TAKE HER WITH YOU.
THANKS, HAMAGUCHI.
YES, SIR...!
HOW MANY DAYS HAS IT BEEN SINCE I LEFT THE HOUSE!
HAAAH!
HOP IN, PLEASE.

SO, YOUR NAME'S HAMAGUCHI?
PLEASED. MINE'S AYAKO.
HAANNKK
...
YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD LOTS ABOUT ME,...
...HUH?
HEH, YOU DON'T NEED TO BE SO UPTIGHT.
HEY, NOT DUMB ARE YOU? LET'S TALK ABOUT SOMETHING - THIS IS BORING.
YOU JOINED THE COMPANY THIS YEAR, RIGHT?
HOW COME YOU CAME TO OURS?
"HOW COME"...?

BECAUSE I THOUGHT I MIGHT BE ABLE TO DO SOMETHING I LIKED.
SOMETHING YOU LIKE? AND WHAT'S THAT?
PRODUCT DESIGN.
WOW! IS THAT RIGHT?
I EVEN DID COMMERCIAL DESIGN IN A HIGH SCHOOL CLUB.
I HEARD THAT I MIGHT BE ALLOWED TO DO PATTERN DESIGN FOR SCARVES AND NECKTIES AND THINGS.
THAT'S GREAT! KEEP AT IT!
S-- SURE.
Then, once I'd finished my delivery...

SORRY FOR THIS, HAMAGUCHI.
I SHOULDN'T BE DRAGGING YOU THROUGH WOMEN'S UNDERGARMENTS.
YOU MUST HATE IT.
HOW ABOUT THIS?
LIKE IT?

*WINTER SALE


AHAHA! YOU'RE SO INNOCENT!
DO YOU HAVE A GIRLFRIEND?
YES, I DO.
IN MY HOME TOWN.

OHH.
BUT BEING SO FAR APART, FEELINGS BECOME DISTANT TOO. YOU'D BETTER STAY ON YOUR TOES. NOT THAT IT'S ANY OF MY BUSINESS.
...
PLEASE HURRY THIS UP.
HAAANNKK
I'M STILL IN THE MIDDLE OF WORK.
YES, YES.

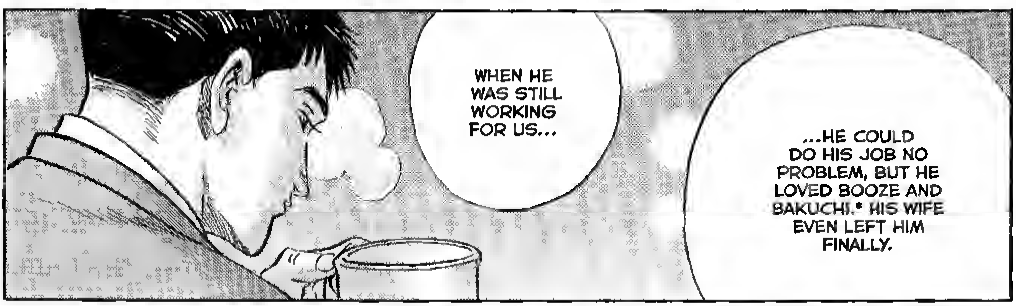
Several days later, on a cold Sunday.
KNOK
KNOK
...?
CAN I COME IN?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ALL ALONE...
...ON A SUNDAY?
DRAWING.
OOH.
SHOW ME?

TO THINK THEY'D ALL GO OUT TO PLAY BASEBALL ON A COLD DAY LIKE THIS!
KAMAGUCHI, DON'T YOU LIKE BASEBALL?
...
I'VE BEEN TERRIBLE AT IT EVER SINCE I WAS A KID.
I'M NOT REALLY A TEAM PLAYER, I GUESS.
I SEE.
ANYWAY, YOU'RE TALENTED AT ART, AREN'T YOU!
YOU THINK SO?
I THINK YOU'VE GOT GOOD TASTE FOR IT.
THIS PATTERN'S REALLY GOOD.
AW... YOU'RE EMBARRASSING ME.
HEY.
THIS SKETCH IS OF THE ZOO IN OKAZAKI, RIGHT?
YEAH.
I GO THERE A LOT.
HMM. IS THAT TRUE?
THESE ARE EXCELLENT.
YOU REALLY LOVE THE ZOO, DON'T YOU? IT'S EASY TO SEE LOOKING AT THESE DRAWINGS.

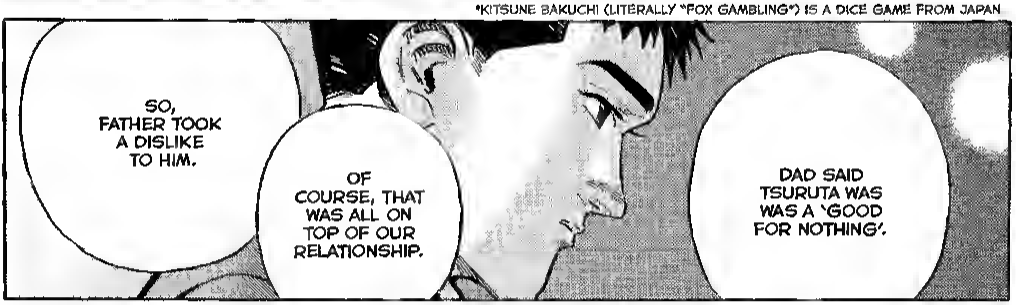
WOULD YOU TAKE ME WITH YOU, NEXT TIME YOU GO?
Y...YES, SURE.
PLUS, THE TRUTH IS... I WANTED TO GET YOU TO TAKE ME OUT TODAY TOO!
HUH--?!
DOES YOUR FATHER KNOW ABOUT THIS?
YES.
I'VE SPOKEN TO HIM.
So, that day too, I became her chaperone.
She was going to meet her girlfriends for the first time in some while, so I had to go with her to Higashiyama.
THIS KID IS HAMAGUCHI.
WHAT?
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

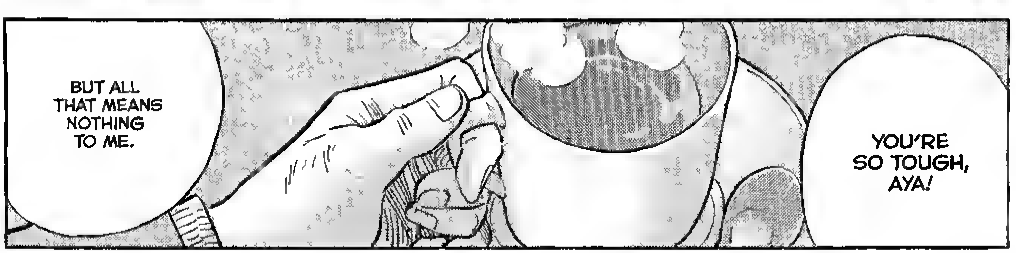
HE'S MY CHAPERONE.
YOU MUST BE JOKING!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
YOUR FATHER DOESN'T TRUST YOU AT ALL, DOES HE?
NOPE. I AM THE DISOBEDIENT CHILD, AFTER ALL.
SAY, HAMAGUCHI.
WE'VE GOT SOME PRIVATE THINGS TO TALK ABOUT, SO COULD YOU WAIT IN A SEAT OVER THERE?
SURE.
BOY, HE DOES JUST WHAT YOU TELL HIM.
JUST LIKE A PUPPY DOG! HEEHEE...!
It felt like the women were making fun of me which put my back up somewhat!
EXACTLY!
IT WAS ALL MY FATHER'S FAULT IN THE FIRST PLACE!
FORCING ME INTO THAT, WHEN I HAD NO DESIRE TO GET MARRIED...!
While I sipped my bitter coffee, I pricked up my ears.
SPRP

SO YOU KEPT MEETING HIM AFTER YOU GOT MARRIED?
YUP.
YOU DID PRETTY GOOD!
I MEAN, TWO YEARS WITHOUT GETTING FOUND OUT, REALLY.
WELL, THE NISHIJIN SQUIRT IS NAÏVE. HE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE WORLD.
OH, HOW AWFUL.
I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT LISTENING TO YOUR STORY MAKES ME FEEL SICK.
YOU?
YEAH, ME TOO.
YOU'RE LIVING MORE AND MORE DANGEROUSLY.
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.
FOR LOVE...
...YOU'D RISK EVERYTHING!
SO YOU SAY!

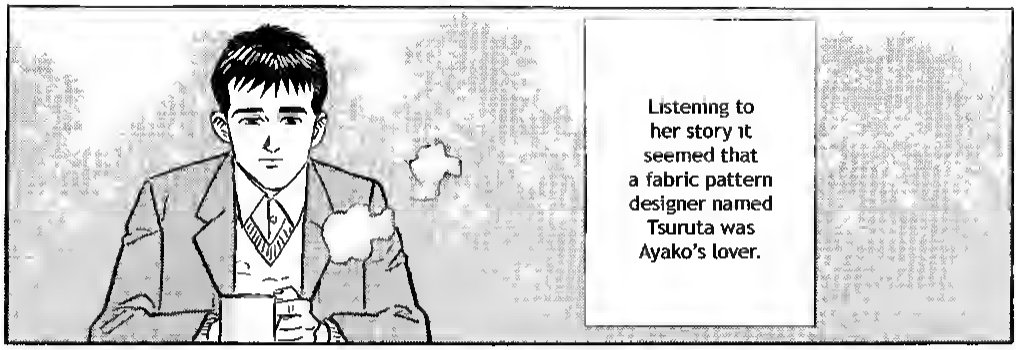

WHEN HE WAS STILL WORKING FOR US...
...HE COULD DO HIS JOB NO PROBLEM, BUT HE LOVED BOOZE AND BAKUCHI.* HIS WIFE EVEN LEFT HIM FINALLY.

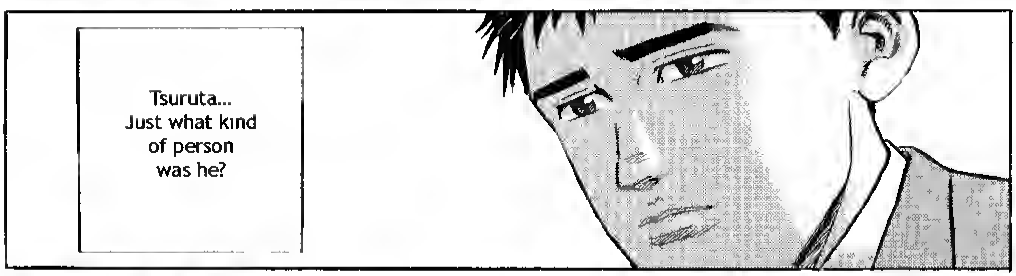
*KITSUNE BAKUCHI (LITERALLY "FOX GAMBLING") IS A DICE GAME FROM JAPAN.

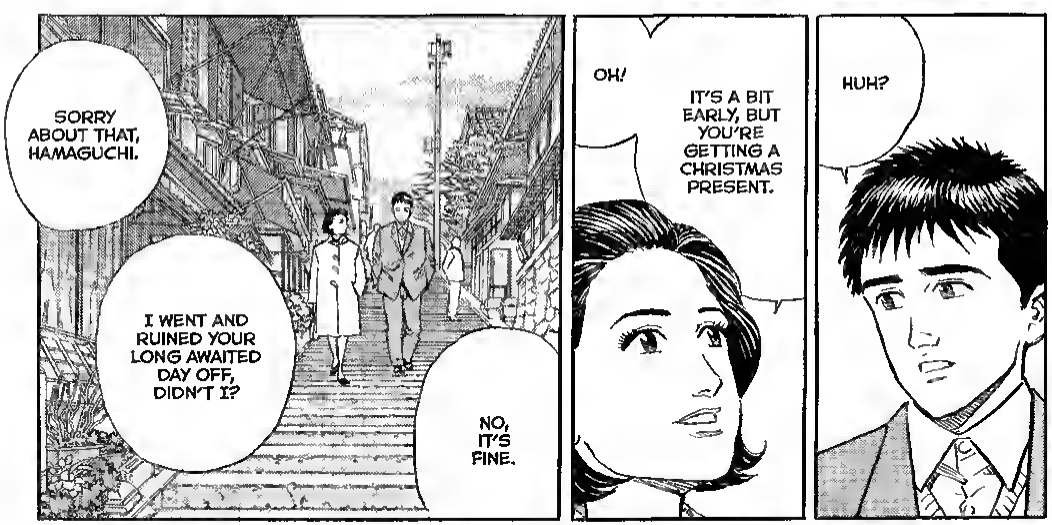

SO, FATHER TOOK A DISLIKE TO HIM.
OF COURSE, THAT WAS ALL ON TOP OF OUR RELATIONSHIP.
DAD SAID TSURUTA WAS WAS A 'GOOD FOR NOTHING'.



YOUR FATHER KNOWS THAT YOU'RE STILL INVOLVED WITH HIM NOW, DOESN'T HE?
YES.
HE THINKS I'M GOING TO TRY TO MEET HIM AGAIN, AND THAT'S WHY I'VE GOT THAT GUARD DOG OVER THERE.


Listening to her story it seemed that a fabric pattern designer named Tsuruta was Ayako's lover.


Tsuruta... Just what kind of person was he?


SORRY ABOUT THAT, HAMAGUCHI.
I WENT AND RUINED YOUR LONG AWAITED DAY OFF, DIDN'T I?
NO, IT'S FINE.
OH!
IT'S A BIT EARLY, BUT YOU'RE GETTING A CHRISTMAS PRESENT.
HUH?

And so, Ayako gave me a muffler.

I'M BACK!
SHRUK
BOY, YOU'RE REAL LATE!
GOT MADE TO ACT AS THE YOUNG MISS'S CHAPERONE AGAIN, RIGHT?
UH HUH.
KYAK
MUST BE NICE!
GETTING TO HAVE DATES WITH HER!
WHY'S IT ONLY EVER YOU?
PLEASE, DON'T MESS ABOUT!
JUST MAYBE THE YOUNG MISS HAS A THING FOR YOU, HUH?
THAT'S NOT WHAT IT IS.
I MEAN, THERE WAS NO-ONE ELSE, WAS THERE?
EH?
YOU WERE ALL OUT PLAYING BASEBALL.
THAT WAS USELESS. WE GET BEAT OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

渡辺商事株式会社
WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT?
W... WELL...
...I WANTED TO GET INTO PRODUCT DESIGNS MYSELF, I WAS THINKING...
OH.
I'D HEARD TALK OF MR. TSURUTA'S DESIGNS, SO...
*WATANABE COMMERCIAL CO LTD
...SO...
...I WANTED TO KNOW WHAT KIND OF PERSON HE WAS.
I SEE.
WELL, ALL OUR DESIGNS...
...ARE FARMED OUT THESE DAYS.
ALL RIGHT, SURE. YOU KNOW THE DESIGNS ROOM, RIGHT? I'LL TAKE A LOOK FOR THEM IN THERE.
SORRY FOR THE TROUBLE.
THANK YOU FOR THAT.
Mr. Kojima, the head of accounts, was the oldest employee at Watanabe Commercial, and knew the company in detail.

The next day.
WHOA!
THE COLORING IS SO NICE.
THIS DESIGN'S LOVELY TOO.
ISN'T IT.
HE DID FINE WORK, IT'S TRUE.
WHY DID HE QUIT?
...
THIS PHOTO IS FROM A COMPANY TRIP.
THE TIME WE WENT TO ISE GRAND SHRINE.
THIS GOOD LOOKING FELLOW AT THE BACK IS TSURUTA.
BETWEEN US, EVEN THOUGH HE WAS MARRIED...
...IT WAS FOUND OUT THAT HE WAS INVOLVED WITH THE BOSS'S DAUGHTER.
THE BOSS FIRED HIM.

AYAKO.
WHAT IS IT?
IS HAMAGUCHI HERE?
YES?
SAY, HAMAGUCHI. THIS COMING SUNDAY,...
...TAKE ME TO THE ZOO, ALL RIGHT.
BUT, I...
THAT'S ALL RIGHT, ISN'T IT, DAD?
I'M GETTING DEPRESSED BEING STUCK IN THE HOUSE ALL THE TIME.
SO YOU WANT TO GO TO THE ZOO, LIKE A LITTLE KID?
WELL, YOU NEVER FAIL TO AMAZE!
WELL, HAMA-GUCHI?
SORRY TO DO THIS, BUT COULD YOU TAKE HER OUT AGAIN FOR ME?
EVERYBODY ELSE WILL BE AT BASEBALL PRACTICE.
YES, SIR.

But, on the day, it snowed.
BRR!
I THOUGHT IT WAS COLD, BUT SNOW!
WHOA! YOU'RE RIGHT!
YAWWW
IT'S THICK! IT'S PILING UP!
LUCKY, EH?
NOW YOU CAN GET OUT OF GOING TO THE ZOO, HUH?
I actually felt a little disap-pointed.
THIS MEANS NO BASEBALL TOO.
WELL, SHALL WE ALL GO BOWLING THEN?

HAMA-GUCHI-KUUUN!
ARE YOU UP THERE?
HUH?
IT'S MISS AYAKO.
IS SHE STILL PLANNING ON GOING, EVEN IN THIS SNOW?
...
SHRUK
UH...
...ARE WE STILL GOING?
OF COURSE!
YOU PROMISED ME, DIDN'T YOU! HURRY UP!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?! IT'S PAST OUR TIME!
Y...YES! SORRY! I'LL BE RIGHT THERE!
SO YOU ARE GOING.
AHA HAHA!
PULLED THE SHORT STRAW, HUH?

D-DNK
D-DNK
D-DNK
D-DNK
THE TRAIN'S SO EMPTY.
BECAUSE OF THE SNOW, HUH?
D-DNK
D-DNK
...
HAMAGUCHI. YOU'VE MADE ME SO HAPPY.
THE MUFFLER.
YOU'RE WEARING IT!
D-DNK
D-DNK
YOU'LL BECOME A FINE PATTERN DESIGNER...
...AND HELP OUR COMPANY PROSPER.
SURE.

OHH!
IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL!
A ZOO IN WINTER!
BUT NOT SURPRISING...
...THERE'S NOBODY AROUND.
BUT GOSH, HOW MANY YEARS HAS IT BEEN SINCE I CAME HERE?
OH...
...IT FEELS SO NICE!
THE MONKEYS ON THAT ISLAND...
...MUST BE COLD, RIGHT?

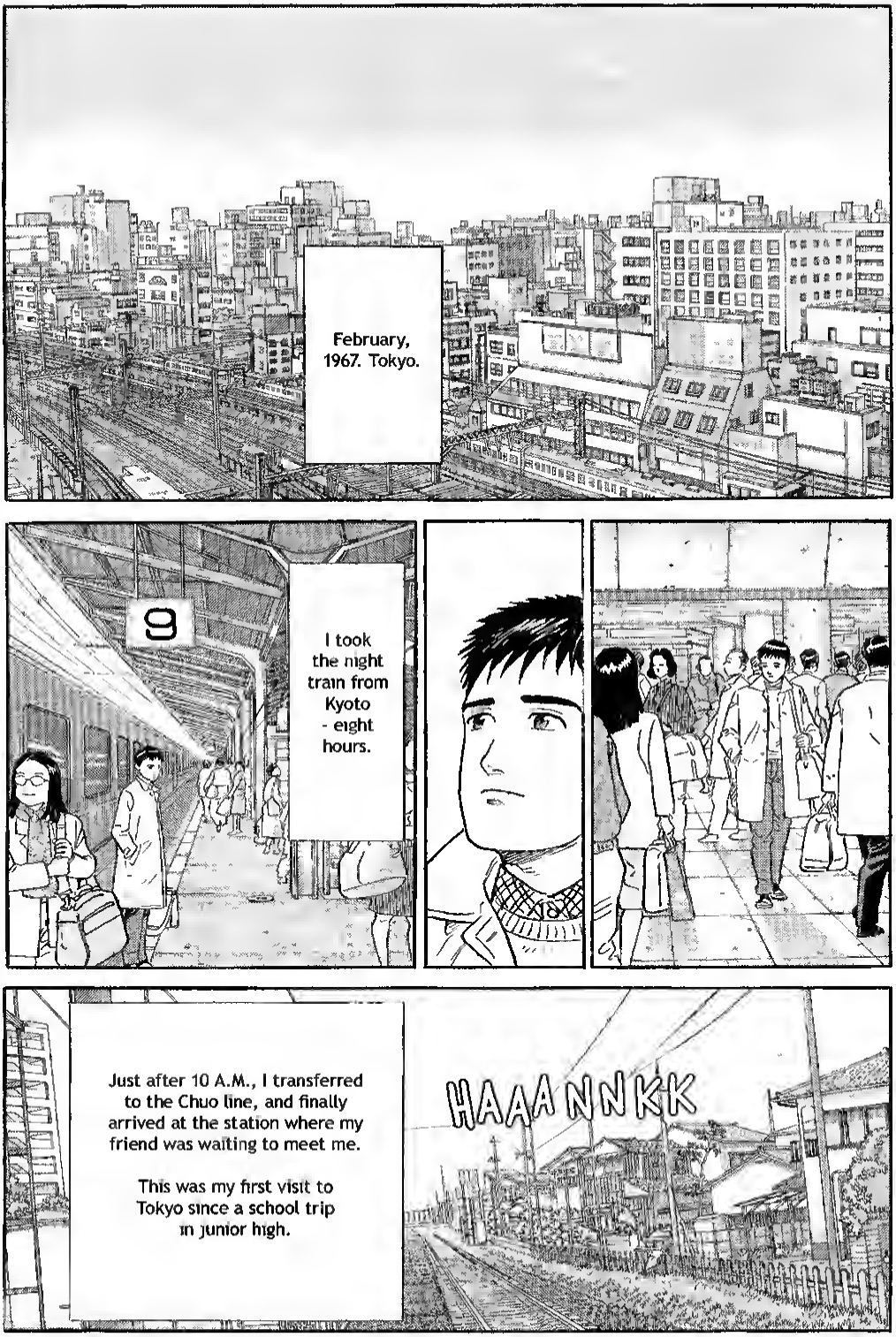
THE ELEPHANTS.
GIRAFFES.
THAT'S RIGHT.
THEY'RE ANIMALS FROM HOT COUNTRIES SO THEY'RE NOT USED TO THE SNOW.
THEY'RE ALL PROBABLY INSIDE THEIR ENCLOSURES, HUH?
SAY, HAMAGUCHI ...
...WHERE'S THE LION ENCLOSURE?
UMM... IT'S A BIT FURTHER IN...
...NEAR THE PELICAN POND.
COME ON, LET'S GO.
CHFF
CHFF
...
CHFF
CHFF

FWAP
FWAP
FWAP
KEE
KEE
KEE
...
FORGIVE ME.

I should have known.
Ayako had used me.

But, for some reason I wasn't the least bit mad.
But rather, in that moment I thought that, contrary to rumor, this man Tsuruta seemed OK.
I was left all alone once again.
*REFERENCE PICTURES FURNISHED BY KYOTO MUNICIPAL ZOO.

Chapter 2
Spring
Beginnings


February,
1967. Tokyo.
9
I took the night train from Kyoto - eight hours.
Just after 10 A.M., I transferred to the Chuo line, and finally arrived at the station where my friend was waiting to meet me.
This was my first visit to Tokyo since a school trip in junior high.
HAAANNKK

WOW, YOU REALLY MADE IT!
AHAHA!
OH! TAMURA!
IT'S SO GREAT TO SEE YOU, HAMAGUCHI.
SORRY IF I'M PUTTING YOU OUT.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
FORGET ABOUT IT! IT WAS ME THAT ASKED YOU TO COME UP HERE, REMEMBER?
My friend Tamura moved up to Tokyo right after graduating from high school. He was working and living-in at a newspaper distributor while going through design school.
HOW MANY DAYS DO YOU HAVE OFF?
TWO.
I'LL HAVE TO LEAVE SUNDAY NIGHT.
Around that time I was thinking about quitting my job at the fabric wholesaler.

I'd taken the blame for failing to stop the boss's daughter from eloping...
...and was even suspected of abetting in the elopement.
I'd confided to Tamura about the depressing situation I was working in at the company.
I SEE...
...YOU'RE GOING THOUGH THE WRINGER, HUH.
YEAH. I'VE BEEN THINKING MAYBE I OUGHT TO QUIT.
THEY'RE NOT LETTING ME DO THE DESIGN JOBS I WAS HOPING FOR EITHER.
HMM.
SO... HEY! DO YOU FEEL LIKE COMING UP HERE?

I WONDER IF THERE'S ANY WORK THOUGH.
SURE.
HE'S THE ARTIST DOING "SHONEN ADVENTURE KING" IN "SHONEN HOLIDAY" NOW, RIGHT?
YEAH, THAT'S HIM.
HE LIVES NEAR TO MY SHOP.
LISTEN, YOU KNOW THE MANGA ARTIST KONDO SHIRO, DON'T YOU?

*MAIASA NEWSPAPERS

SO, I WENT TO HANG OUT AT HIS PLACE ONCE TO SEE WHAT IT'S LIKE BEING A MANGA ARTIST.
IT WAS CRAZY BUSY OVER THERE...
...AND HE SAID HE'S LOOKING FOR ANOTHER ASSISTANT RIGHT NOW.
AN ASSISTANT?
YEAH, TO DO THE SOLID FILLS AND WHITES AND STUFF.

THEY DRAW THE BACKGROUNDS TOO, RIGHT?
YOU WERE REALLY GIFTED AT MANGA, WEREN'T YOU?
YOU USED TO COPY SAITO TAKAO AND NAGASHIMA SHINJI, RIGHT?
WHAT DO YOU THINK? WHY NOT GIVE THE ASSISTANT GIG A SHOT?

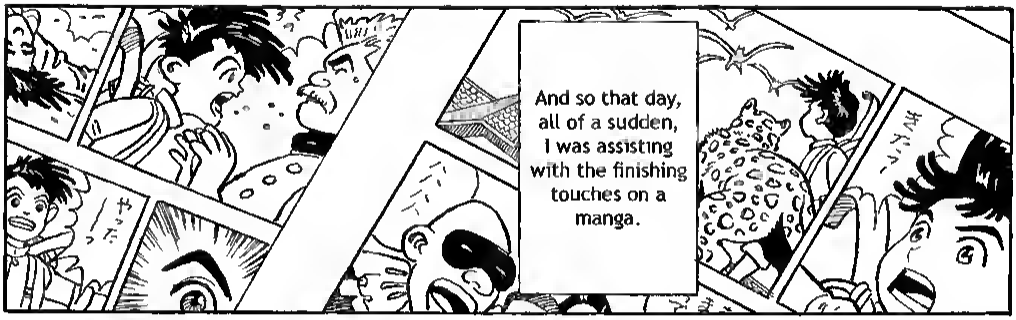
And so...
...I was set to meet with the mangaka Kondo Shiro.
He didn't start work until late in the afternoon, so...
WHA--?! FOR REAL?
WELL, YOU KNOW.
SHE WORKS AS A MODEL AT THE DESIGN SCHOOL.
WHY YOU!
YOU'VE GOTTA INTRODUCE ME! GODDAMN IT!
...almost 'til evening...
...we were absorbed in talking, rambling on and on for the first time in ages.
THIS IS IT.
WHOA!
MY HEART'S KINDA RACING!

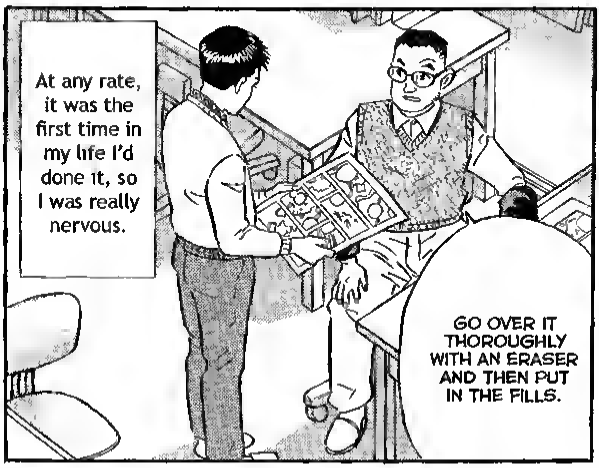
DING DONG
YES?
UM... I'M TAMURA. I CALLED YESTERDAY.
OH...!
ABOUT THE ASSISTANT THING.
HI!
HEY!
WHAT'S UP, FUJITA?
WHO IS IT?
WE'RE BUSY HERE!
IF IT'S AUTOGRAPH HOUNDS, SENO 'EM PACKING, I TOLO YOU!
OH...
...NO, IT'S...
...THE...
...ASSISTANT THING.
HUH? WHAT...?
HELLO!
OH, WAIT.
UHH, TAMURA, WASN'T IT? FROM THE MAIASA NEWSPAPER PLACE?

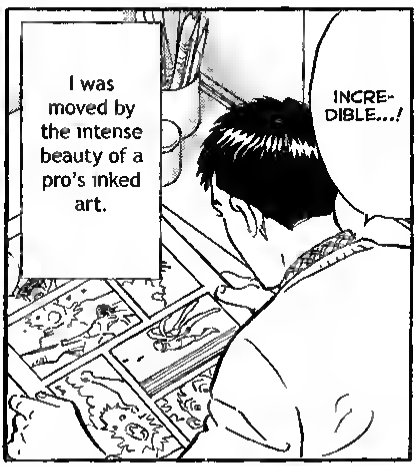
UM, I'VE BROUGHT MY FRIEND WITH ME.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
AH!
SURE, SURE.
COME ON IN.
THANKS.
EXCUSE US.
MR. KONDO!
YEAH?
TAMURA'S BROUGHT THAT FRIEND WHO WAS HOPING TO BE AN ASSISTANT.
UH HUH.
ALL RIGHT, PUT HIM TO WORK AT AN EMPTY DESK.

FUJITA.
READY SOME SUPPLIES FOR HIM!
ALL RIGHT.
THIS WAY.
YOU CAN WORK OVER HERE.
HUH!
WORK, BUT...
...BUT... I'M NOT...!
NOW, NOW!
HURRY UP AND SIT. SIT!
HEY! TAMURA!
YOU CAME HERE TO WORK, DIDN'T YOU?
ER... YES.
WE'RE ALREADY WELL PAST DEADLINE.
WE WON'T BE ABLE TO GET THE MAGAZINE OUT IF WE DON'T FINISH TONIGHT!
UH...
...BUT I...

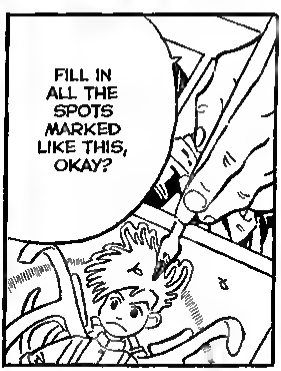
...UH...
...I JUST CAME TO OBSERVE AND LEARN TODAY!
YES, I KNOW THAT! THAT'S WHY WE'RE GETTING YOU TO DO SOME WORK, RIGHT!
ARE YOU SURE?
IT'S FINE.
WE'RE JUST GOING TO SEE WHAT YOU CAN ACTUALLY DO.
FUJITA.
KEEP PASSING HIM SOLIDS TO FILL.
WILL DO.
TAMURAAA!
I'LL BE OFF THEN.
I'VE GOT THE EVENING DELIVERIES TO DO.
WHAT, YOU'RE LEAVING...?!
ALL RIGHT, I'LL BE BACK LATER.
OKAY, THANKS.
HEY...!
STICK WITH IT, HAMAGUCHI!


And so that day, all of a sudden, I was assisting with the finishing touches on a manga.

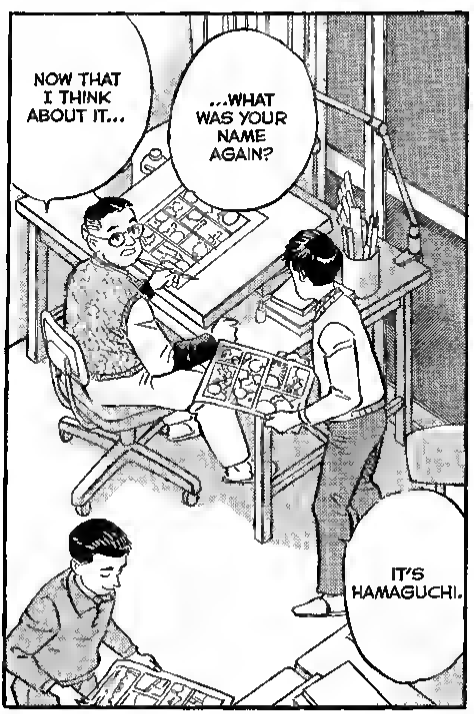

At any rate, it was the first time in my life I'd done it, so I was really nervous.
GO OVER IT THOROUGHLY WITH AN ERASER AND THEN PUT IN THE FILLS.


I was moved by the intense beauty of a pro's inked art.
INCRE-DIBLE...!

My hand shook with tension as I inked in the solids.


FILL IN ALL THE SPOTS MARKED LIKE THIS, OKAY?

YES, SIR.


NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...
...WHAT WAS YOUR NAME AGAIN?
IT'S HAMAGUCHI.

HAMAGUCHI... HAMA-CHAN THEN, EH?
I'M MORIWAKI.
THAT'S FUJITA THERE.
PLEASED.
HE BUNGLES THINGS UP ALL THE TIME...
...SO HE GETS CALLED "FUDGE-IT-UP" TOO.
I'M HIGASHINO FROM "SHONEN HOLIDAY."
I'M IN CHARGE OF "SHONEN ADVENTURE KING."
I KNOW IT,...
...IT'S VERY POPULAR.
AND THAT'S MR. KONDO.
IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE YOU COULD TALK TO HIM AT ALL RIGHT NOW THOUGH.
ALL RIGHT, EVERYBODY KEEP AT IT!
WE HAVE TO GET THIS FINISHED BY MIDNIGHT, OKAY!
I'M COUNTING ON YOU, MR. MORIWAKI.
TELL THAT TO MR. KONDO!

HEY!
MORIWAKI!
YES?
GN!!
DO THIS FOR ME.
IT NEEDS TO FEEL LIKE A POWERFUL BLIZZARD.
AND THIS TOO.
IT'S THE HERO'S CABIN I DREW LAST EPISODE.
IT'S THE SAME COMPOSITION, SO GET FUJITA TO DO IT.
SURE THING.
ALL RIGHT, HERE...
...LOOK AT THE PROOFS OF LAST EPISODE.
OKAY.
AND, UH, HAMAGUCHI ...
...YOU DO THIS PANEL.
ERR...
...I CAN'T DRAW BACK-GROUNDS.
IT'S JUST EFFECT LINES, SO YOU CAN DO THEM WITH A RULER. YOU'LL BE FINE, YOU'LL BE FINE.
ALL RIGHT, I'LL GIVE IT A TRY.
OH BOY...!
NOW, STOP YOUR DAWDLING!
WE'RE IN A HURRY HERE!
Y...YES, MA'AM.

DING DONG
KCHAK!
YO!
OH!
MR. KIKUCHI!
WHAT THE HELL?
STILL WORKING?
NOT AGAIN!
HERE TO BUG US WHEN WE'RE BUSY!
HEY, KONDO!
STOP, MAN, STOP!
WHAT'S THE POINT OF WORKING THIS HARD FOR A LIVING?
COME ON, I'M TAKING YOU TO SHINJUKU!
HANG ON.
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS.
WE'VE GOTTA FINISH THIS TONIGHT.
PLEASE DON'T GET IN THE WAY.
YOU'RE WASTED AGAIN, AREN'T YOU?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I HAVEN'T TOUCHED A DROP!
HEY, WHO'RE YOU?
HI... PLEASED.

THAT'S HAMAGUCHI. HE JOINED US TONIGHT.
HMPH.
POOR SAP.
BEING A MANGA ARTIST IS ONE TOUGH GIG, Y'KNOW.
YES.
I USED TO DRAW MANGA ALONG WITH KONDO IN THE OLD DAYS.
BUT MY MANGA DIDN'T SELL.
TOO AVANT-GARDE.
AND YOU KNOW, A MANGA ARTIST CAN'T JUST GO READ MANGA ALL THE TIME.
HEY.
YES.
COULD YOU STOP WITH THE LECTURES. PLEASE.
HE DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT ANYTHING YET.
THAT'S WHY I'VE GOTTA TEACH HIM.
RIGHT?
YES.
DOING NOTHING BUT WORK ALL DAY...
...IS BORING, MAN.
Mr. Kikuchi was Mr. Kondo's friend and an illustrator.

11:30 P.M.
Just when I wondered why it had gone so quiet, I realized Kikuchi had crashed on the sofa.
FHH
DONE! ALL THE FIGURES ARE DONE!
BAM
GOOD WORK!
MORIWAKI.
THESE ARE THE LAST PAGES.
WHOA!
YOU STILL LEFT US WITH LOADS TO DO?!
SORRY 'BOUT THAT. I CHANGED THE COMPOSITION. GAVE MORE PLACE TO THE BACKGROUND.
HAND THE OTHERS TO FUIJITA...
...AND YOU DO THESE.
DAMN.
THIS IS GONNA TAKE TILL MORNING AGAIN.
NO, NO! YOU'VE GOT TO HURRY IT UP!

In any case, I was in a dream state.
I was oblivious to the passage of time.
When I came to my senses, Kondo and Kikuchi had left without my noticing.
WHERE DID MR. KONDO GO TO?
OFF DRINKING AGAIN SOMEWHERE, NO DOUBT.
AS ALWAYS.
HE'S DOING THE NEXT SET OF THUMBNAILS.
...
LET'S FINISH THIS UP FAST AND GET OUT OF HERE TOO.
So work continued until...
HOW MANY PAGES ARE LEFT?

...2:00 A.M.
YES!
FINISHED!
FUJITA.
DO THE FILLS AND WHITES ON THIS!
ALL RIGHT.
KTAK
GAH!
AAH!
WHAT THE HELL!!
HURRY! SOAK IT UP WITH SOME PAPER TOWELS, QUICK!!
HOW MANY TIMES DO YOU HAVE TO MAKE THE SAME SCREW UP!
BOF
YOU IDIOT!
I'M SORRY.
WELL, THANK GOODNESS IT WASN'T INK.
DRY IT WITH THE HAIR DRYER, QUICKLY.
I'M SO SORRY, I...!
YOU BUNGLER!

YAAWW
So it was a little after 3:00 A.M. when the pages were finally completed.
GOOD WORK, EVERYONE.
Miss Tono headed to the printer's in a taxi.
SEE YOU NEXT WEEK THEN!
OKAY!
EIGHTEEN PAGES IN ALL.
Somehow, it all seemed to have passed in the blink of an eye.
IS THE WORK LIKE THIS EVERYDAY?
MORE OR LESS...
...BUT IT'S NOT EVERY DAY.
TODAY WAS SPECIAL. WE WERE RIGHT ON DEADLINE THERE.
I SEE.

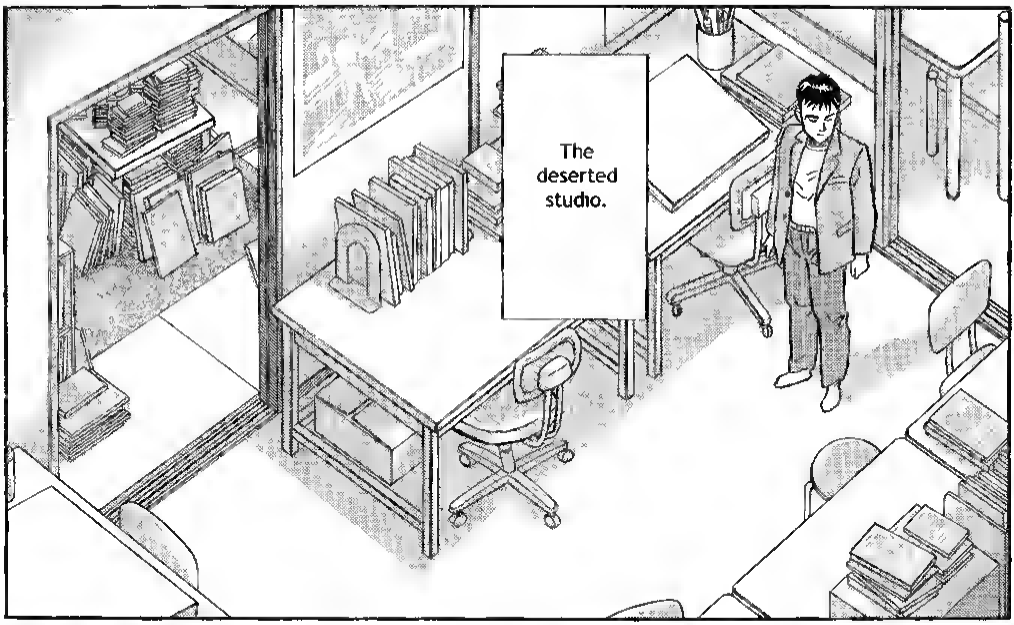
ALL RIGHT.
SHALL WE GO GRAB A MEAL?
YOU MUST BE HUNGRY...
...EH, HAMAGUCHI?
STARVED.
HEY, FUJITA, LET'S GO!
OH.
I...
...I'M FINE. I'LL TIDY UP HERE AND GO HOME.
AS YOU WILL.
THANKS FOR THAT THEN.
HE'S INCREDIBLY TIMID WITH STRANGERS ALL THE TIME. HE TAKES HIS WORK SERIOUSLY THOUGH...
SOMETIMES... THERE'S NO HELPING THAT GUY.
...IT'D BE GOOD IF HE GOT OUT MORE.

PAAAAH
A DRINK TO THE END OF WORK!
THIS TIME ESPECIALLY!
YOU HAVE ONE TOO, HAMAGUCHI.
ONE AT LEAST, IT'S ONLY BEER.
MR. KONDO HAS A TAB AT THIS PLACE.
ORDER WHATEVER YOU LIKE.
THANKS.
HEY, BAR-TENDER!
THIS IS A NEW ASSISTANT THAT JOINED US TONIGHT.
I SEE!
NICE TO MEET YOU.
PLEASED.
HA HA HA!
MUST'VE BEEN A SURPRISE, GETTING THROWN INTO WORK LIKE THAT, HUH?
A BIT, BUT I REALLY LEARNED A LOT.
TO THINK THAT'S HOW A MANGA STORY GETS PUT TOGETHER.
IT'S THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN IT.
WELL, THAT'S GOOD.
YOUR COMING IN TODAY REALLY SAVED OUR SKINS.

PFAAA
OH, I'M SO HAPPY! NOW I CAN QUIT!
HUH?
THIS TIME...
...I'M REALLY QUITTING!!
THAT FUJITA STILL CAN'T BE RELIED ON...
...SO IT'S UP TO YOU, HAMAGUCHI!
YOU CAN'T BE --
H... HANG ON A SECOND, PLEASE!
I'M NOT --
YOU THINK I COULD STAY AT A PLACE LIKE THAT FOREVER!
HE'S THE ONLY ONE THAT GETS TO HAVE ANY FUN!
I KNOW ALL ABOUT IT!
...
MR. KONDO'S GOT A GIRLFRIEND.
EVEN THOUGH HE'S GOT A BEAUTIFUL WIFE AND A KID!
HE'S YOUNG, HE'S GOT TALENT. HIS MANGA'S POPULAR, HE'S IN ONE WEEKLY MAG AND TWO MONTHLIES...
...AND HE'S NOT JUST EARNING PEANUTS, YOU KNOW.

I MEAN, I ACKNOWLEDGE IT, SURE.
MR. KONDO IS JAPAN'S GREATEST MANGAKA.
SURE!
YOU THINK SO TOO, RIGHT?
WHAT I CAN'T FORGIVE...
...IS THE WAY HE ALWAYS DISAPPEARS IN THE MIDDLE OF WORK LIKE THAT!
BUT...
...DOESN'T THAT GO TO SHOW THAT MR. KONDO DEPENDS ON YOU, MR. MORIWAKI?
YOU MORON!
HE TALKS A GOOD GAME AND JUST USES ME!
ALL I DO IS WIPE HIS ASS FOR HIM!
OH, NO, THAT'S --
AND I CAN'T DRAW ANYTHING BUT BACKGROUNDS.
GLP!
BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER NOW...
...BECAUSE I QUIT.
HAMAGUCHI... YOU LOOK AFTER THINGS.
BUT I'M NOT READY, I...!
IF I STAY THERE...
...I'LL BE AN ASSISTANT MY WHOLE LIFE.
...

ALL RIGHT...
...I'M OFF!
HUH?
LEAVING...? WHAT ABOUT ME?
ERR, FIRST TRAINS ARE RUNNING NOW.
THIS IS THE KEY TO THE STUDIO.
SEE YOU AROUND!
MORIWAKI-SAAAN!
2F
I was left by myself.
I had no choice but to go back to the studio.
KCHAK
KREEE


The deserted studio.

The bustling period gone, the place had a sad, lonely atmosphere...
...like it had suddenly become an empty husk.

It was an uncanny space...

...but, for some reason, I felt a peculiar sense of relief.

Dawn light began to streak the night sky.
No one came back to the studio.
Eventually I'd dozed off to sleep.
After that... how long did I sleep?
HEY!
YOU!
And when I woke up --
HN...?

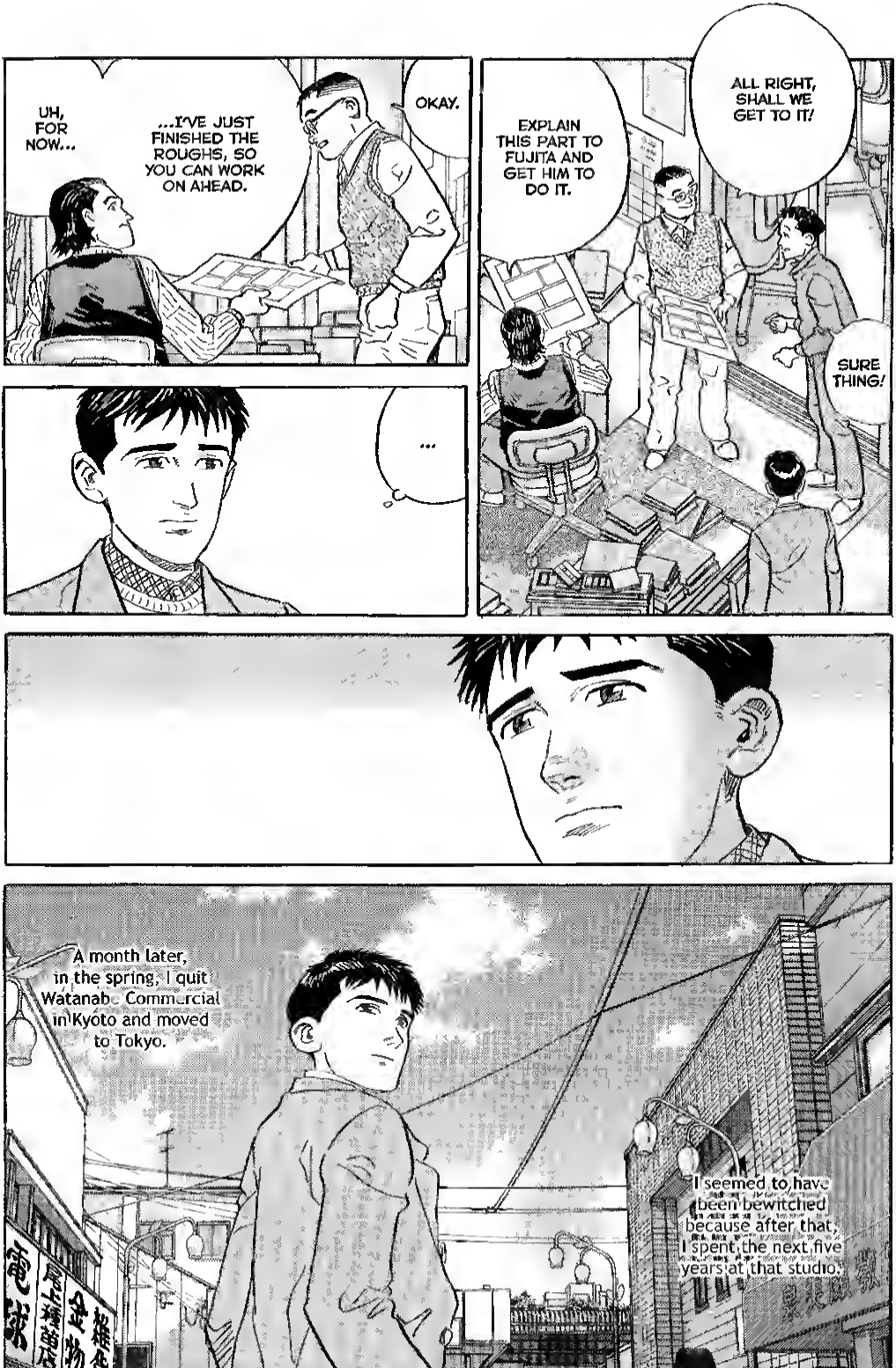
NN...!
AAH!
WHDD
OH!
I... I'M SO SORRY!
NO, IT'S OKAY.
UMM... YOU ARE...?
ERR, UH...
...HAMAGUCHI. THE ASSISTANT HOPEFUL.
OH, RIGHT. SO IT'S YOU.
AW, SORRY, SORRY.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE A STRANGER. SORRY FOR WAKING YOU.
NOT AT ALL.
DID YOU WORK ON THE FINISHES YESTERDAY, RIGHT UP TO THE END?
YES.
I SEE. THAT WAS A LOT OF HARD WORK.
WANNA GO TO THE BATH HOUSE? IT'LL WAKE YOU UP.
HUH?

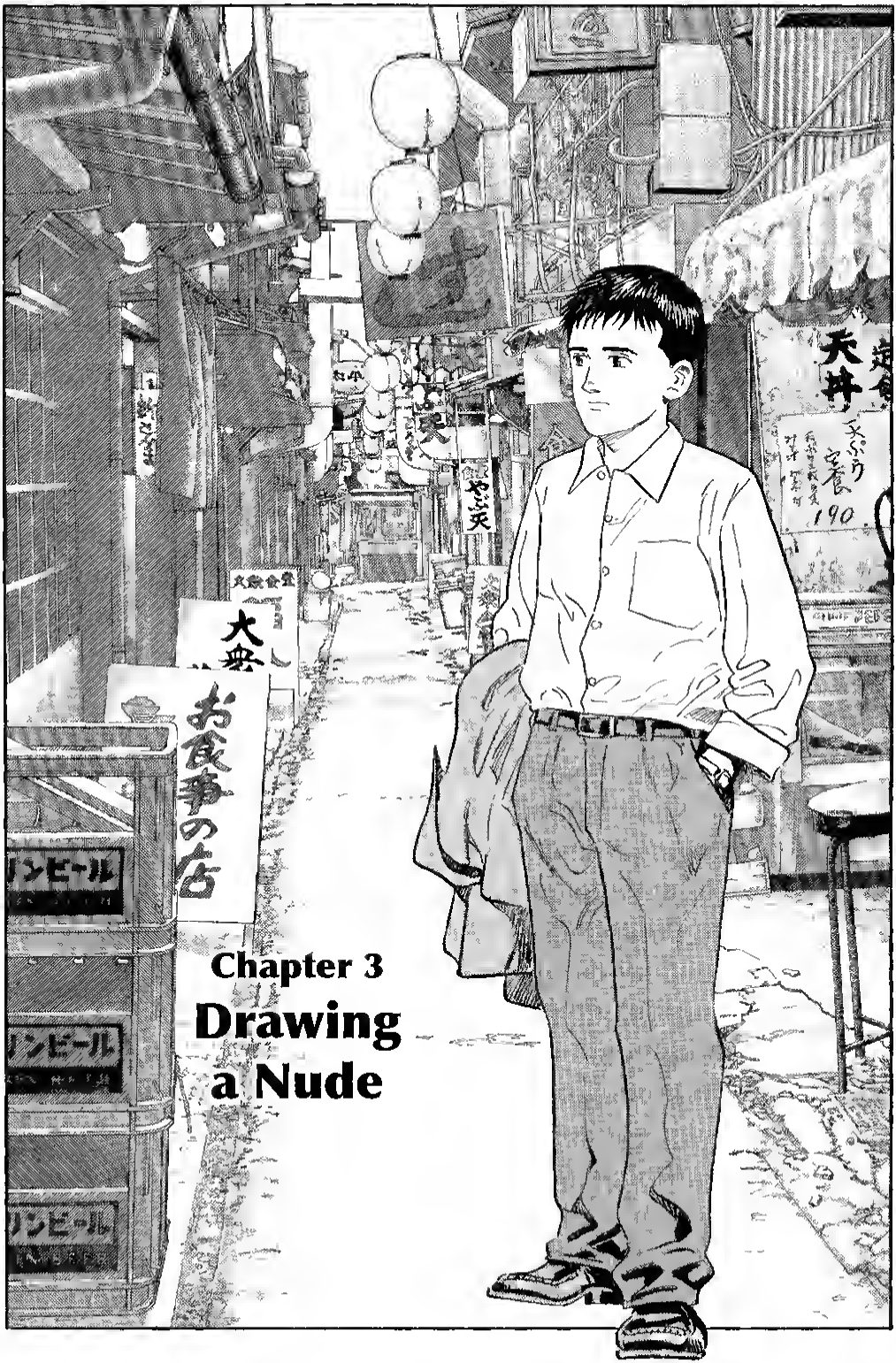
I LOVE BEING FIRST IN THE WATER AT A BATH HOUSE.
IN THE AFTERNOONS WHEN IT'S EMPTY OF PEOPLE LIKE THIS, I CAN REALLY UNWIND.
THE BATH TO YOURSELF.
MMM/
IT'S TOTALLY REFRESHING.
OHH, THIS IS SO GREAT!
WHERE'RE YOU FROM?
KYOTO. BUT MY HOMETOWN'S TOTTORI.
OHH, TOTTORI, HUH.
I WAS JUST THINKING HOW I'D LIKE TO VISIT THERE ONCE.
YEAH, IT'S A REALLY GREAT PLACE. ALTHOUGH I ONLY REALIZED IT AFTER I'D BEEN AWAY FROM IT.

WHEN CAN YOU MOVE OUT HERE?
SPLASH SPLASH
IT'S GOT SEA, MOUNTAINS... HOT SPRINGS NEARBY TOO!
THE SOONER THE BETTER.
SPLSH
SURE, BUT I'LL -
ALL RIGHT, LET'S TALK WHILE WE HAVE A BITE TO EAT.
I'VE GOT AN APARTMENT RENTED NEAR THE STUDIO, SO YOU CAN SEND YOUR LUGGAGE THERE.
SHLRRP
YOU'LL BE SHARING IT WITH FUJITA THOUGH, THAT OK?
SLRRP
UH, WELL, IT'S JUST THAT...
...MR. MORIWAKI TOLD ME THAT HE WAS QUITTING NOW I'D SHOWN UP.
SHLRRP

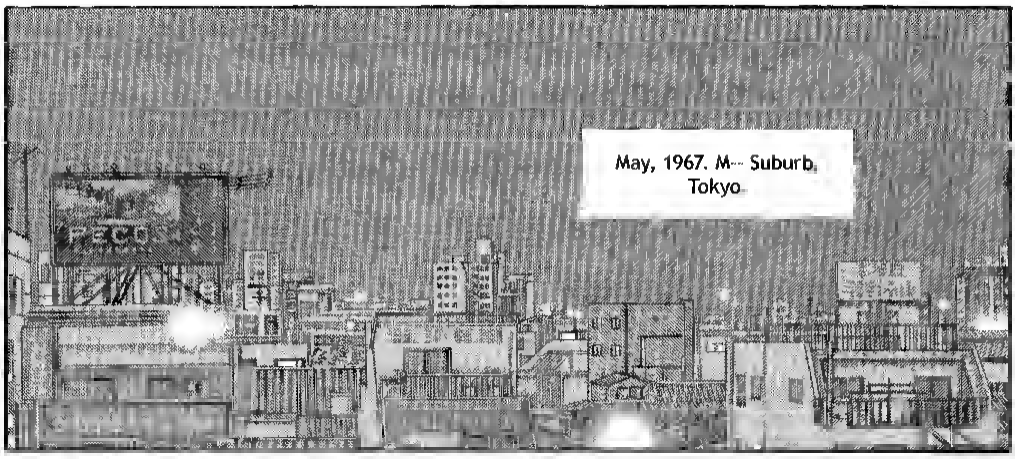
IS THAT ALL RIGHT?
SLRRP
MM. I SEE.
HE'S JUST GOT THE SICKNESS AGAIN.
MNCH
...
IN SPITE OF APPEARANCES ...
...MORIWAKI AND FUJITA BOTH LOVE MANGA SO MUCH THEY CAN BARELY STAND IT.
SHRRP
I DO TOO, BUT...
...WE'RE ALL CHASING OUR DREAMS.
...
THIS MAY BE AN EXAGGERATION...
...BUT THAT STUDIO IS A PLACE THAT SPINS OUT DREAMS.
MAYBE THE PLACE IS HAUNTED...
...BECAUSE THERE'S SOMETHING MYSTERIOUS THAT POSSESSES PEOPLE IN PLACES OF CREATION.

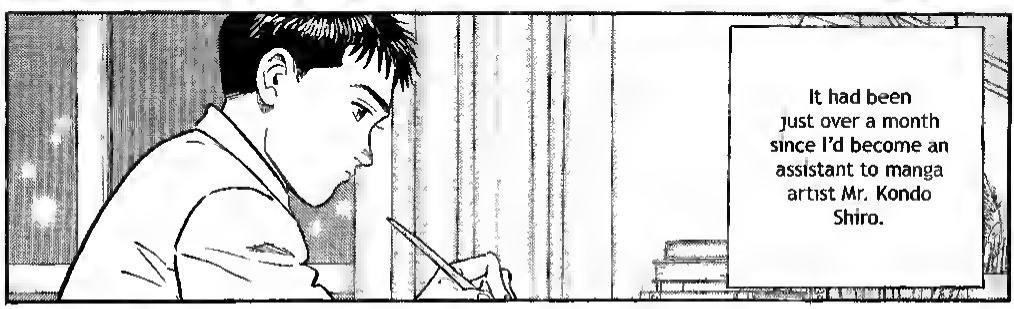
THAT'S WHY...
...WE GET SO MANY WEIRDOS THAT SHOW UP THERE.
...
ONCE THEY SET FOOT INSIDE THE PLACE, IT'S DAMNED HARD TO GET THEM OUT.
I THINK YOU'LL UNDERSTAND WHAT I MEAN SOON ENOUGH.
Then, as the sun began to set again, we returned to the studio.
GOOD MORNING!
KIND OF LATE, AREN'T YOU?
DID YOU FINISH THE THUMBNAILS?
...
MM. JUST A BIT MORE TO GO.
OH...!
MR. MORIWAKI!


UH, FOR NOW...
...I'VE JUST FINISHED THE ROUGHS, SO YOU CAN WORK ON AHEAD.
OKAY.
...
EXPLAIN THIS PART TO FUJITA AND GET HIM TO DO IT.
ALL RIGHT, SHALL WE GET TO IT?
SURE THING!
A month later, in the spring, I quit Watanabe Commercial in Kyoto and moved to Tokyo.
I seemed to have been bewitched because after that, I spent the next five years at that studio.



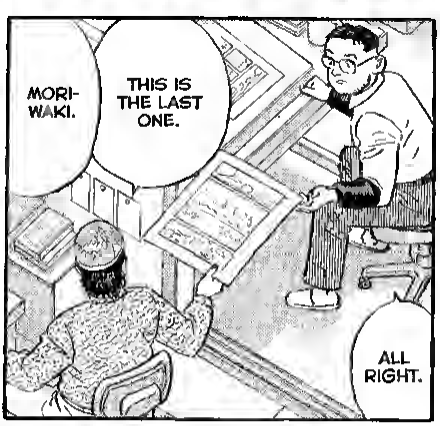
Chapter 3
Drawing a Nude


May, 1967. M--- Suburb, Tokyo.


It had been just over a month since I'd become an assistant to manga artist Mr. Kondo Shiro.

We did one serialized-weekly episode for "Shonen Adventure King," and a one-shot for a monthly magazine...
...over the course of eight days.

PFF


MORI-WAKI.
THIS IS THE LAST ONE.
ALL RIGHT.

WE'RE ALL SLEEPY, I KNOW, BUT HANG IN THERE.
JUST A BIT TO GO.
HEY, HAMAGUCHI.
PUT SLANTED EFFECT LINES IN HERE.
OKAY.
That day, we stayed up all night, and I'd been about forty hours without sleep.
THAT JUST LEAVES ...
...FIVE PAGES.
I'M PUTTING ON COFFEE. MR. MORIWAKI?
YEAH. PLEASE.
4:00 A.M. The pages were finally finished.
After finishing we went back to the apartment and slept like the dead.

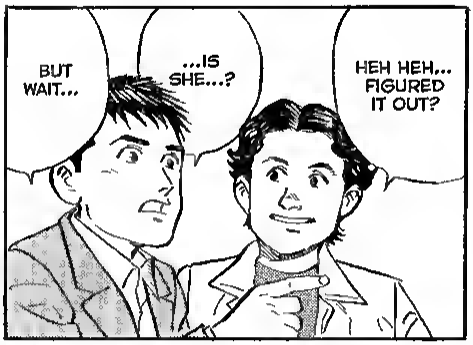
KNOK KNOK
HEY!
HAMA-GUCHI!
KCHAK
YOU IN HERE?!
WHAT'S THIS?! ALREADY IN BED!
IT'S ONLY 8 P.M.. COME ON, GET UP, LET'S HAVE SOME FUN!
NNN...
HRR...
HNN...
I WAS UP ALL NIGHT...!
WHAT THE HELL...?
Tamura, who lived nearby, had been a high school classmate back in our hometown.
I'M ALL IN!
OH, SORRY! SORRY!
It was Tamura who had introduced me to the assistant job.
YAW-WWN
SAY. DO YOU HAVE TOMORROW OFF?
UH HUH.
THEN WHY NOT COME HANG OUT WITH ME?
YOU'LL GET TO SEE A NAKED WOMAN RIGHT BEFORE YOUR EYES!
HUH? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

After moving to Tokyo, Tamura started working at a newspaper wholesaler while attending design school.
HEY.
IS THIS REALLY OKAY? I'M NOT A STUDENT!
IT'S FINE.
THERE ARE GUYS THAT SNEAK IN.
THE PROF CAN'T BOTHER TO CHECK WHO THEY ARE.
THIS'LL BE YOUR FIRST TIME SKETCHING A NUDE WOMAN, HUH?
YEAH.
MY HEART'S KINDA THUMPING.
GLP
And so the sketching of the nude model began.

The prof set the pose.
To remain inconspicuous, I began sketching from way back in the corner.
I was embarrassed about staring at the model...
...so I could only look in furtive glances.
I was even more self-conscious when drawing her breasts and pubic region.
Obscenely, I even got an erection. Just hurry up and draw!

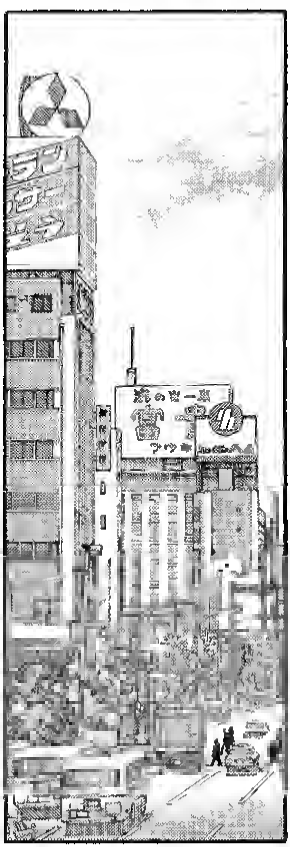
But even so, as I continued drawing...
...I was able to become focused on the sketching.
The drawing became fun...
...and gradually my indecent thoughts dissipated.
I changed position.
Casually looking around for Tamura, I found him right in front of the model, so close he could have taken a bite out of her.

SO?
GET SOME GOOD DRAWINGS?
I WAS SO ON EDGE.
BUT IT WAS A GOOD LESSON.
LET ME SEE.
AH!
FWAP
WHOA, THIS IS PRETTY GOOD, AND IT WAS YOUR FIRST TIME...!
STOP IT!
YOU'VE GOT A GIFT FOR SKETCHING.
HIYA, TAMURA!
...
HEY YOU!
HAVE YOU BEEN WAITING?!
NAW.
THIS IS MY FRIEND HAMAGUCHI.
PLEASED.


BUT WAIT...
...IS SHE...?
HEH HEH... FIGURED IT OUT?

I was stunned. This was the woman who, until just before, had been nude in front of me.
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING!
SHE HAD HER HAIR UP FOR THAT.
I was ashamed of myself for having lusted after Tamura's girlfriend.

Somehow, I couldn't find a place to set my eyes.
WE'RE GOING TO SHINJUKU.
YOU'RE GONNA COME WITH US, RIGHT?



THIS IS SOMEONE I WANTED YOU TO MEET...
MISAKO.
...SO I ASKED HER ALONG TOO.

PLEASED.

It was my first time hanging out in Shinjuku.
HUH?
TAMURA, YOU SMOKE?
YUP.
PUFF PUFF
CHECK THIS OUT.
IT'S HIS SKETCH-BOOK.
NOOO!
STOP!
WHOA, IS THIS ME?
IT LOOKS JUST LIKE ME. IT'S SO GOOD!
WHICH ONE? SHOW ME.
AWW!
GIMME A BREAK!
OH, IT REALLY IS A GOOD LIKENESS!
WOW, SACHIKO, YOU'RE SO THICK DOWN THERE, HUH?
OH, DON'T BE AN IDIOT!
STOP IT!
THAT'S ENOUGH ALREADY.
I HEARD YOU DRAW MANGA?
HUH?

NO... I'M STILL JUST AN ASSISTANT.
BUT...
...YOU WANT TO BECOME A MANGAKA, RIGHT?
YEAH. IF I CAN.
IF HE BECOMES POPULAR, I'M GOING TO BE HIS MANAGER.
WHAT?!
YOU'RE A REAL BIG TALKER, YOU KNOW.
Evening came as we chatted in a café after dinner.
ONLY EIGHT O'CLOCK, HUH.
WELL, WE'RE HEADING OFF.
HUH?
HEADING OFF... WHAT ABOUT ME?
MORON. THAT'S WHY I INTRODUCED YOU TO MISAKO.
ALL RIGHT, TAKE GOOD CARE OF HIM, OKAY?
TAMURAAA!

And then, Tamura and his girlfriend vanished into the crowd.
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
DO? I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING AROUND HERE.
SHINJUKU, YES?
OH, RIGHT. I FORGOT YOU'D JUST COME UP FROM KYOTO.
BUT...
ALL RIGHT, SHALL WE GO TO A BAR I KNOW?
...I DON'T HAVE MUCH MONEY EITHER.
NO PROBLEM.
IT'S A PLACE I WORK AT PART TIME.
ARE YOU SURE?
WELL, BUT HOW ANNOYING TO GO STRAIGHT HOME NOW, RIGHT?

She was two years older than me. She said she was a university student...
...but I wasn't sure if it was true.
The bar was a small pub in the basement of an old building in a back street of Kabukicho.
HELLO ...
... MA'AM!
OH!
MISA?
The lighting was dusky and I felt uneasy.
WHY ARE YOU HERE? DON'T YOU HAVE TODAY OFF?
YEAH.
WE'RE HERE TO HANG OUT. I DON'T KNOW ANYWHERE ELSE TO GO...
...AND HERE WE DON'T NEED MONEY, DO WE?

WHAT!
YOU CAN'T JUST FREE LOAD!
AW...
...THAT'S CHEAP!
REALLY ...
...I JUST MET THIS GUY TODAY. HE'S A BUDDING MANGA ARTIST.
PLEASED.
OOH, A MANGA ARTIST, EH.
THIS PLACE IS A HAUNT FOR WEIRD ARTIST TYPES.
PAINTERS, ILLUSTRATORS, POETS, AND WHATEVER.
HI, HI...
...AND UNSALEABLE FOLK SINGERS.
NOW, NOW. I'M NOT UNSALEABLE, MISA.
DESPITE MY APPEARANCE ...
...WHAT I DO IS EXPOSE TO THE WORLD THE SADNESS AND SUFFERING OF LIVING...
FHHH
...FOR THOSE PEOPLE OF INTEGRITY WHO ARE MARGINALIZED BY A SOCIETY OF DECEPTIONS.
OH, NO!
NOW WE HAVE TO LISTEN TO TOMO'S POINTLESS GRUMBLING AGAIN!
It was an environment I'd never come into contact with before.

HEY.
DID THEY SAY YOU WERE A MANGA ARTIST?
NO.
I'M STILL AN ASSISTANT.
THAT'S GREAT, MAN! AWESOME!
MANGAKA ARE THE BEST.
HUH?
SANPEI SHIRATO'S "LEGEND OF KAMUI".*
NOW THAT'S A MANGA THE WHOLE WORLD OUTTA KNOW ABOUT.
YOU READ IT?
UH.
LEGEND OF WHAT...?
WHAT THE HELL! I SUPPOSE YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW "GARO"!
NO WAY, MAN! YOU AREN'T QUALIFIED TO BE A MANGAKA!
MAY-BE.
AW, FOR SHAME!
YOU HAVE TO RESIST, YOUNGSTER!
O--
OKAY ...!
TOMO!
ALL RIGHT THEN!
YOU'LL LISTEN TO MY PROTEST SONG!!
TOMO, NOT THAT!
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS!
AND DON'T MIX US UP IN YOUR CRAP!

*MANGA WHICH RAN IN GARO MAGAZINE FROM DECEMBER 1964 TO JULY 1971. PUBLISHED IN THE US BY VIZ COMICS, 1987

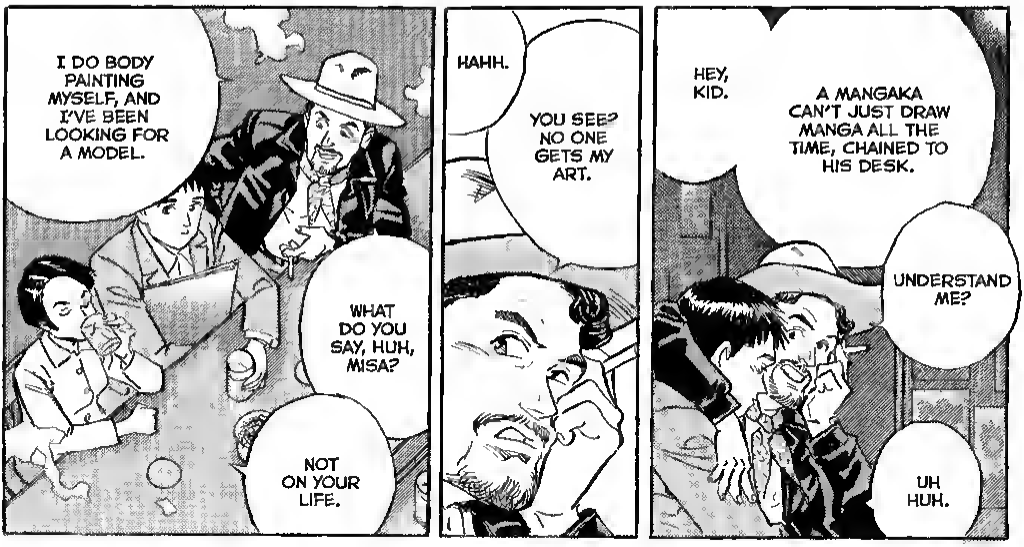
WHO ARE YOU!
WHO ARE YOU OVER THERE!
DISGRACE-FUL!
THERE, AUTHORITY!!
THOUGHT CONTROL!
THINGS CLEAN ONLY IN APPEARANCE ...GO EAT SHIIIT!
KREAK
AW.
HAS TOMO STARTED HIS PROTEST SONGS ALREADY?
OH, THIS IS RARE!
ARE YOU ALONE TODAY?
I'M GETTING OLD.
HANA DUMPED ME.
OH!
I NEED YOU TO CONSOLE ME, MA'AM.
MR. KIKUCHI!
HN...?
WHO'RE YOU AGAIN?
WHAT? DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME?

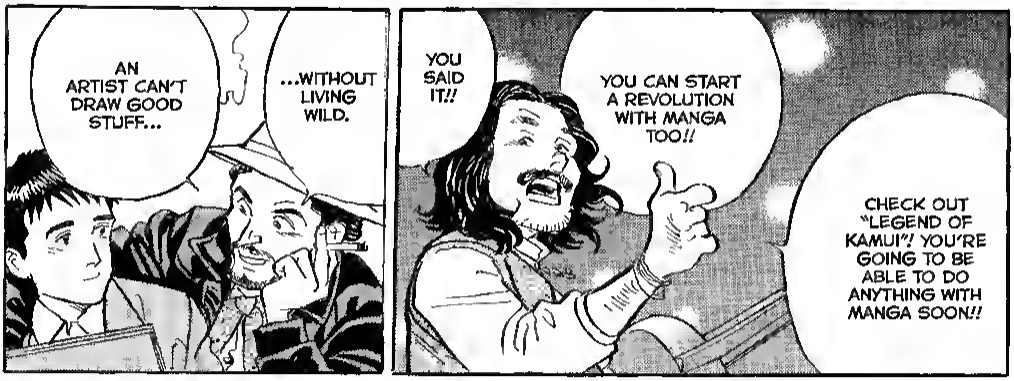
AT MR. KONDO'S.
KONDO?
I JUST JOINED HIM AS AN ASSISTANT. I'M HAMAGUCHI.
ASSISTANT ...?
OH, RIGHT!
SO, AN APPRENTICE OF KONDO, HUH!
YOU'RE TERRIBLE, MR. KIKUCHI. YOU DON'T REMEMBER PEOPLE...
...BECAUSE YOU'RE ALWAYS DRUNK!
DESTROY THE SHELTER!
ALL RIGHT, WELL. IF YOU'RE AN APPRENTICE OF HIS, THEN YOU'RE PRACTICALLY ONE OF MINE TOO!
DRINK UP!
"DRINK"? BUT...
...I DON'T... DRINK ALCOHOL.
I'M STILL A MINOR.
WHAT'S THIS GUTLESS TALK! WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH ANYTHING!
GET THIS KID A SHŌCHŪ-SODA!*
ARE YOU SURE? I DON'T KNOW.
KONDO'S BOTTLE!
LET'S EMPTY IT!
MR. KIKUCHI... REALLY.

*SHŌCHŪ IS A TRADITIONAL SPIRIT DISTILLED FROM BARLEY, SWEET POTATOES OR RICE WHICH ORIGINATED IN KYUSHU

KONDO'S APPRENTICE, EH?
INTERESTING.
ALL RIGHT, DRINK UP, KID!
DON'T LET KONDO BEAT YOU!
HUH?
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT...!
GULP
NAW, NO!
DOWN IT, MAN! DOWN IT!
DON'T PUSH HIM SO HARD!
HE HASN'T DRUNK BOOZE BEFORE.
REND!
CRUSH!
WARRIORS OF THE REVOLUTION!
HANGING OUT AT A PLACE LIKE THIS AT YOUR AGE...
...SHOWS PROMISE, KID!
UFF!
WHAP
SAY WHAT? FROM WHERE I SIT, EIGHTEEN, NINETEEN YEARS OLD...
...THAT'S STILL A PUNK IN DIAPERS, YOU GET ME?
UH HUH.
WHAT BIG TALK!
EVERYONE THAT PUTS ON AIRS ABOUT BEING AN ARTIST IS JUST A BIG KID!
COULD YOU PLEASE STOP CALLING ME KID, MR. KIKUCHI?

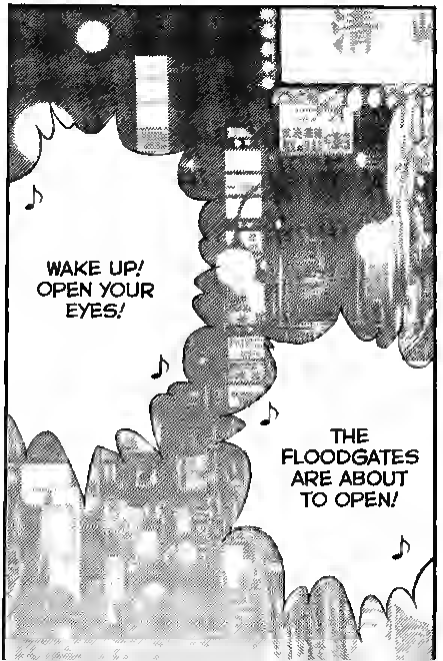
OOOH! OOOH!
ALL RIGHT! A TOAST TO UNSULLIED YOUTH!
A STRAY DOG HOWLS TO ITSELF!
CHEERS !!
ANOTHER ONE!
OH, MY!
YOU HOLD YOUR LIQUOR BETTER THAN I EXPECTED.
YEAH.
I'M FEELING PRETTY GOOD.
HUH?
IS THAT YOUR SKETCH-BOOK?
AAH...!
N...NO! DON'T LOOK!
WHOA!
I'M BLOWN AWAY. YOU DO NUDE SKETCHES LIKE A PRO.
YOU DIRTY BOY!
COME ON!
GIVE IT BACK, PLEASE!
THAT MODEL IS MY FRIEND.
YEAH, THIS IS GOOD. REAL GOOD.
MR. KIKUCHI, PLEEEASE!


I DO BODY PAINTING MYSELF, AND I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR A MODEL.
WHAT DO YOU SAY, HUH, MISA?
NOT ON YOUR LIFE.
HAHH.
YOU SEE? NO ONE GETS MY ART.
HEY, KID.
A MANGAKA CAN'T JUST DRAW MANGA ALL THE TIME, CHAINED TO HIS DESK.
UNDERSTAND ME?
UH HUH.


AN ARTIST CAN'T DRAW GOOD STUFF...
...WITHOUT LIVING WILD.
YOU SAID IT!!
YOU CAN START A REVOLUTION WITH MANGA TOO!!
CHECK OUT "LEGEND OF KAMUI"! YOU'RE GOING TO BE ABLE TO DO ANYTHING WITH MANGA SOON!!

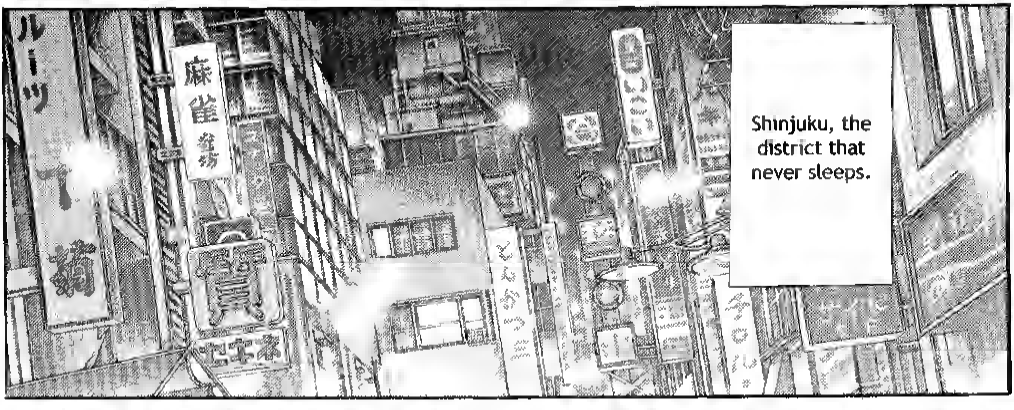
THERE'S NO JUSTICE IN ONLY THE SALEABLE!!

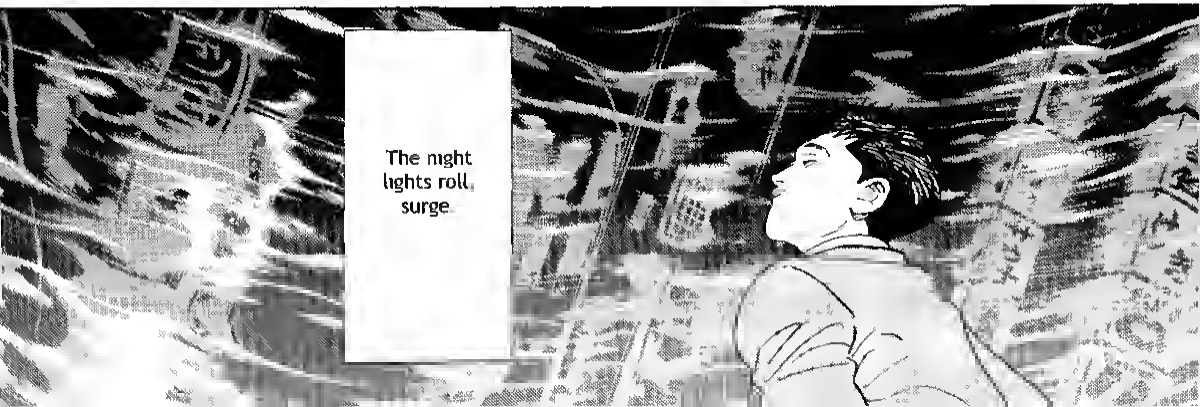
AWW!
HERE WE GO AGAIN!
TOMO'S WHINING SONGS!


WAKE UP! OPEN YOUR EYES!
THE FLOODGATES ARE ABOUT TO OPEN!

ALL RIGHT!
OFF TO THE NEXT STOP, KID!
NEXT...?
"BLACK HOLE"!
IT'S A GO-GO CLUB - I DID THEIR MURAL!
LET'S GO!
MR. KIKUCHI, TAKE ME WITH YOU!

* Trou noir


麻雀
Shinjuku, the district that never sleeps.


The night lights roll, surge.

Immediately ...
BRAANNGG THROOOMM
...I was assaulted by loud Rock and R&B.
SHRAANG
THRRM THRRM
The lights heaved violently, flashing over and over.
THOOM THRRM BADOOM
I was overwhelmed by all this energy.
HEY, KID!
THIS IS MY WORK!
LOOK AT THIS!
WOW!
The abstract painting snaked around the entire wall.

I was drunk.
COME ON, LET'S DANCE!
WHA?
YOU'LL BE FINE! YOU'LL SEE!
I CAN'T!
NOW DANCE!
She dragged me out and I haltingly moved to the rhythm.
AHAHAHA! YOU'VE ACTUALLY GOT A GOOD EAR!
REALLY?
THIS GOOD...?
LIKE THIS?
YAY!
But... I was so sleepy.
THMMM THOOM BOOM GTHOOM

The music changed to a slow number.
Somehow, I ended up dancing in the arms of a very tall woman.
Kikuchi and Misako were sitting at a table at the back, grinning widely.
Unconsciously, I was becoming aroused. I clutched her close to me and danced.

I was dizzy with the experience of so many things happening to me for the first time.
WHAT'S WRONG, KID?
URP!
I FEEL AWFULLL!
HRR!
AH! STOP! DON'T PUKE HERE, MAN!
GET TO THE TOILET!
BLARGH!
BLRRGH!
I could barely stand.
FHH!
THIS CASANOVA'S A REAL LADY-KILLER, EH?
HEY, DIDN'T YOU REALIZE?
WHAT?
YOUR SLOW DANCE PARTNER OUT THERE.
THAT WAS A DUDE!

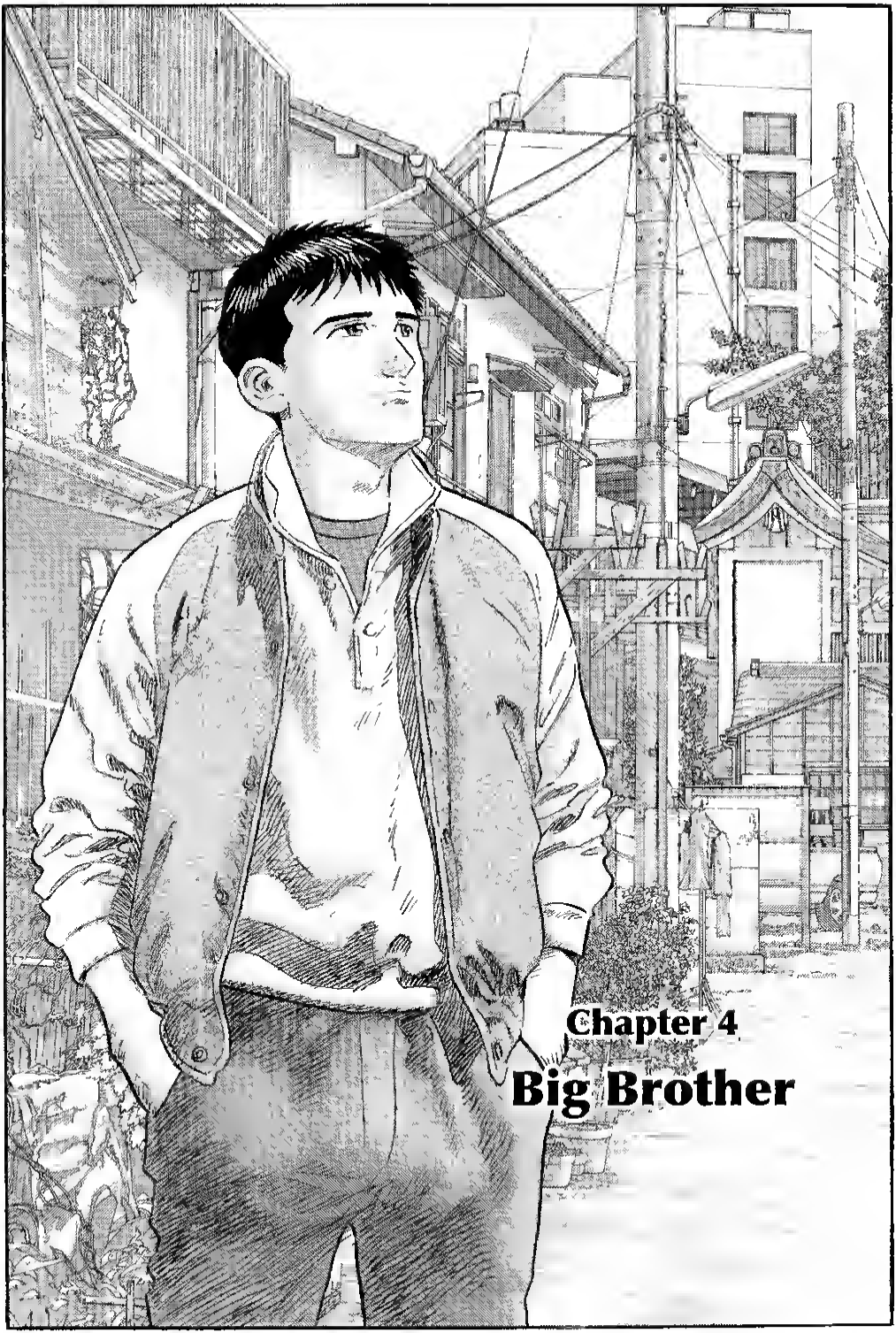
HUH?
HE'S A CROSS-DRESSER!
WHAAH?
LOOK, DON'T CRY, KID!
YOU'RE JOKING?!
DRINK! DRINK UP!
IT DOESN'T MATTER!
YOU NEED TO EXPERIENCE A WHOLE LOAD OF STUFF TO WRITE POWERFUL MANGA!
URP!
HAAA...
Then I blacked out.

OH!
NN.
YOU'RE WAKING UP?
HRR AHH!
THANK GOOD-NESS.
I'VE GOT TO GET GOING IN A MINUTE.
HNN...?

HERE'S SOME WATER.
YOU DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING, DO YOU?
...
UMM.
DID I...?
YOU WERE IN BAD SHAPE. YOU COULDN'T EVEN STAND UP.
TETSU BROUGHT YOU HERE...
...IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT.
TETSU...?
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT MR. KIKUCHI?
GLP
YES.
KIKUCHI TETSUO.
IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME.
HE'S NEVER SHOWN UP HERE SOBER.
...
HE'S SELF-CENTERED.
PUTS ON AIRS LIKE HE'S SOME OUTLAW.
YEAH, THAT PICTURE.
HE PAINTED IT.

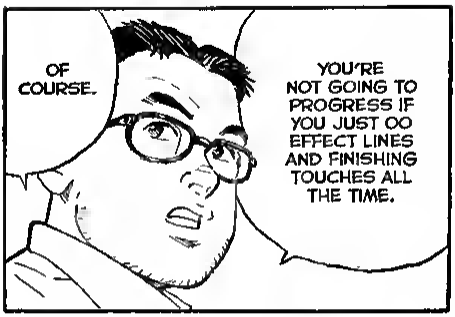
IT'S GOOD, ISN'T IT?
TETSU DOES HAVE TALENT.
AND YOU...
...NO MORE BINGE DRINKING.
SURE.
OKAY. LET'S GO.
UM... EXCUSE ME...
...BUT, WHERE ARE WE?
SORRY?
WHAT, YOU REALLY HAVE NO IDEA?
NO... I'M SORRY.
LISTEN. TURN LEFT ON THAT STREET AND GO STRAIGHT.
OKAY.
YOU'LL COME OUT ONTO A MAJOR ROAD.
TURN LEFT THERE, WALK, AND YOU'LL REACH SHINJUKU STATION.

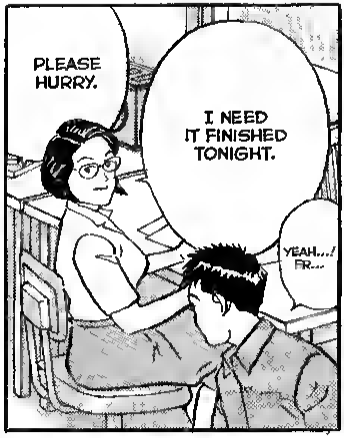
TUUT
TUUT
It was peak rush hour for commuters and students at Shinjuku Station.
I walked against the hordes of people going to their companies and schools.
At that moment, for some reason, I felt a strange sense of comfort.
Perhaps by that time, I was already under the spell of the unknown mysterious spirit that dwelt in that dream-spinning place.

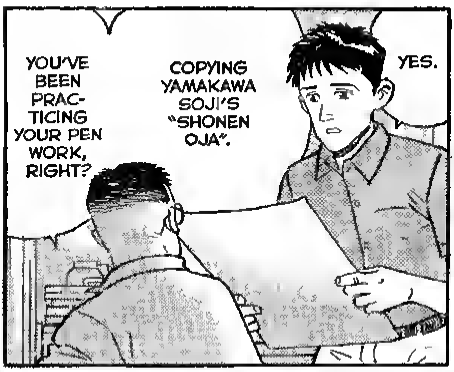


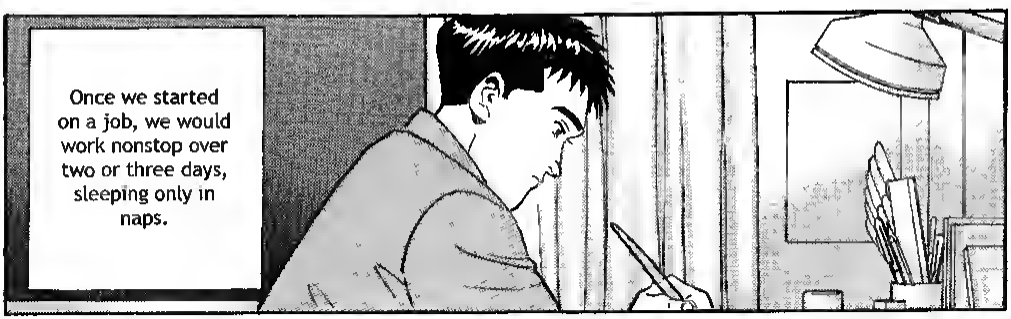
Chapter 4
Big Brother

September, 1967.
〈WHAT?〉
〈DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?〉
I'd been in Tokyo about six months by now, working as a mangaka's assistant.
HAMAGUCHI.
YES?
WHEN YOU'RE DONE WITH THAT, TRY DOING THE BACKGROUND HERE.
DRAW THE DEMON'S HIDEOUT BEHIND THE CHARACTERS.
THE ROUGH'S ALREADY DRAWN IN.
WHAA?!
YOU WANT ME TO DO A PANEL THAT BIG?









All kinds of people came to visit the studio.

They showed the breadth of Mr. Kondo's acquaintances.

His guests that day were students from a nearby missionary-established university.
ER...!
〈WHAT ELSE?〉
THAT MEANS, "ANYTHING ELSE?" RIGHT?
Mr. Kondo was learning English conversation from the students.
〈ANY QUESTION WILL DO.〉
〈LET ME THINK ABOUT IT.〉
KCHAC
HEY!
YOU IN HERE?!
AH!
MR. KIKUCHI!
YO!
WHAT THE?
STILL WORKING?!
HUH?
WHAT'RE YOU GUYS DOING?
STUDYING, STUDYING.
THEY'RE TEACHING ME ENGLISH.
ENGLISH?
SO THEN, YOU REALLY *ARE* SERIOUS ABOUT GOING TO AMERICA?

YEAH.
IT'LL BE NEXT YEAR THOUGH.
WHAT THE HELL? GODDAMN IT! TAKE ME WITH YOU, KONDO.
FINE!
AHAHAHA
IF YOU'LL BE MY INTERPRETER.
YOU CAN'T, MR. KONDO!
UNLESSS YOU WORK AHEAD OF SCHEDULE, THEN I CAN'T LET YOU GO.
OH, TONO, DOLL.
FOR SUCH A BIG PUBLISHER YOU SURE TALK LIKE THEY'VE GOT AN AWFULLY TINY ASS!
TIGHT IT MAY BE, BUT THAT'S FINE BY US.
AND MR. KIKUCHI, I DON'T WANT YOU SLOWING MR. KONDO DOWN.
HYUK!
HOW CAN YOU SOUND SO HARSH WITH SUCH AN ADORABLE FACE?
WELL, HAVE YOU BEEN DRAWING IT?
AWW!
THE NEW WAVE OF MANGA!
LECTURES AGAIN?
HEY, KID.
DOIN' GOOD?
YEAH.
MANGA'S GOING TO BECOME AN AMAZING THING NOW!

GOOD!
LET'S STOP THERE TODAY.
EH? FINISHED YOUR LESSON?
I CAN'T WORK WHILE YOU'RE HERE!
LET'S GO.
SAY WHAT?
I WASN'T GETTING IN THE WAY!
TAKE CARE OF THE REST FOR ME...
SURE.
...EH, MORIWAKI?
WE NEED SIX TWO-TONE PAGES NEXT TIME.
PLEASE GET THEM DONE QUICKLY!
Mr. Kondo and Kikuchi left, and all of a sudden, it was quiet.
RRRIING RRRIING

RRRIINNG
OH, SORRY MISS TONO. COULD YOU GET IT?
YES, HELLO?
YES, THAT'S RIGHT, BUT...
...HE'S NOT IN RIGHT NOW.
HM? HAMAGUCHI ...?
HAMAGUCHI ...
...THE ASSISTANT HERE... YES.
I SEE.
ONE MOMENT, PLEASE.
...
HAMA-GUCHI, ...
...IT'S YOUR OLDER BROTHER.
HUH...?
The call came out of the blue.
WHAT'S UP? WHY ARE YOU IN TOKYO?
ON BUSINESS ...?
HUH ... NOW? I'M WORKING RIGHT NOW, AND INTO THE NIGHT, PROBABLY.
WHAT IS IT, HAMAGUCHI?

ERR... UH.
MY BROTHER'S HERE. HE SAYS HE WANTS TO SEE THE STUDIO.
OH!
THAT'D BE NICE. TOO BAD MR. KONDO ISN'T HERE THOUGH.
WHY NOT? YOUR PAGES ARE AHEAD OF SCHEDULE...
...AND HE'S COME ALL THIS WAY...!
REALLY?
YES, HE MUST BE CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT HIS LITTLE BROTHER IS UP TO THESE DAYS, RIGHT?
I suddenly felt depressed. I'd never got along with my brother.
WHAT'S WRONG, HAMAGUCHI?
YOU'VE SUDDENLY GONE VERY QUIET.

IS THAT AN ISSUE FOR YOU?
IT'S NOT LIKE HE DOESN'T KNOW YOU'RE DRAWING MANGA, IS IT?
NO, HE KNOWS.
BUT...
...I MOVED UP HERE WITHOUT EVER CONSULTING HIM ABOUT IT.
SO HE'S ANNOYED?
PROBABLY.
HE THINKS THERE'S NO WAY I COULD EVER BECOME A MANGA ARTIST.
NATURALLY.
THAT'S WHAT EVERYONE THINKS.
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU CAN SHOW HIM HOW WONDERFUL MANGA IS.
IF HE SEES YOU WORKING, THEN...
...MAYBE HE'LL HAVE A CHANGE OF HEART.
I WONDER.
THEN THIS IS PERFECT, RIGHT?
SHOWING HIM THE STUDIO, I MEAN.

7:00 P.M. I went to the station to meet my brother.
BIG BROTHER!
OH!
MITSUO!
YOU LOOK WELL!
I AM.
THIS IS QUITE SUDDEN. YOU TOOK ME BY SURPRISE.
YEAH, SORRY, SORRY!
I ORIGINALLY PLANNED TO GO BACK TONIGHT ON THE OVERNIGHT TRAIN...
... BUT, SINCE I'D COME ALL THIS WAY, I THOUGHT I SHOULD SEE HOW YOU'RE DOING BEFORE I HEAD HOME.
MOM'S BEEN WORRIED ABOUT YOU.
WONDERING IF YOU'RE LIVING ALL RIGHT.
YOU QUIT YOUR JOB WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING. THEN WHEN YOU BLURTED OUT THAT YOU WERE GOING TO BECOME A MANGA ARTIST, WELL...!
I'M SORRY.

My brother was ten years older than me. It was just us two kids.
When I was five, our father passed away.
Afterwards, my mother raised us by herself. She worked days and nights...
...so she was often not home.
Instead I had my brother. He took the place of my father.
Sometimes he scolded me, but he also loved me and I counted on him.
Like a father he was also frightening sometimes.
Then, before I realized it, I was unable to look straight into the eyes of this serious, upstanding person.

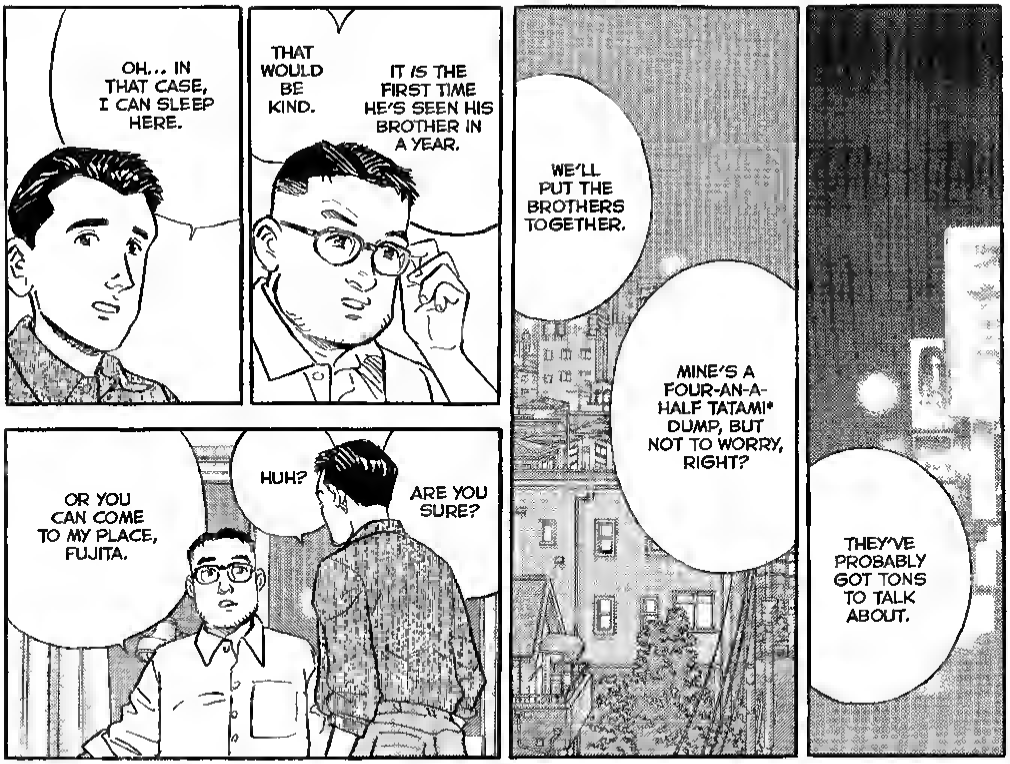
I BEG YOUR PARDON...
... FOR SUDDENLY INTRUDING WHILE YOU ARE SO BUSY.
NO, IT'S NO BOTHER!
ALTHOUGH MR. KONDO IS OUT RIGHT NOW, UNFORTUNATELY.
I'M MORIWAKI. I'M SORT OF THE CHIEF ASSISTANT.
AND THIS...
...IS FUJITA.
PLEASED.
I'M TONO FROM "SHONEN HOLIDAY."
IT'S A PLEA-SURE.
WE WON'T BE FINISHED UP FOR ANOTHER TWO TO THREE HOURS...
I WILL.
THANK YOU SO MUCH.
...SO PLEASE, MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.
THIS IS NOTHING...
...BUT I HOPE YOU MIGHT ALL ENJOY IT.
OH!
THANKS!
ALL OF US HERE LOVE TREATS!
ALL RIGHT!
THE LAST LEG!
LET'S GET THIS JOB DONE!

SO, WORKING ON MANGA IS JUST AS TOUGH AS YOU'D IMAGINE, EH?
MAY I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
HOW MANY YEARS DOES IT TAKE...
...TO GET TO DRAW AS WELL AS YOU DO, MR. MORIWAKI?
OH... ME?
I GUESS IT'S BEEN FIVE YEARS?
I'VE BEEN HERE SO LONG...
...BUT I'M COMFORTABLE HERE.
REALLY?
FIVE YEARS?
ACTUALLY ...
...WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I THOUGHT I WANTED TO BECOME A PAINTER.
OH?
NO?! I'VE NEVER HEARD ABOUT THIS BEFORE!
YEAH, I WAS JUST DREAMING THOUGH.
I WANTED TO GO TO AN ART SCHOOL, BUT I WASN'T THAT GOOD AT PAINTING SO I GAVE UP ON THE IDEA.
...
I KNEW I LACKED THE ABILITY.

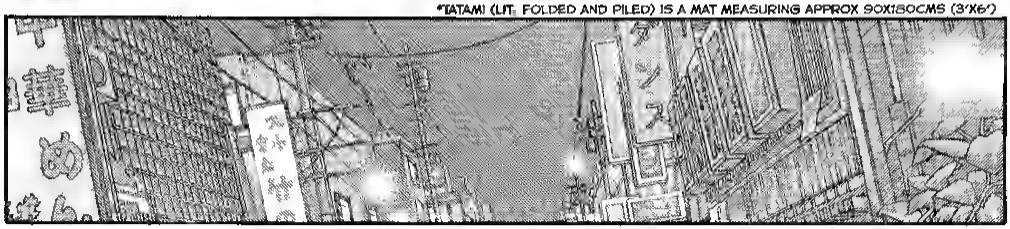
WHEN MITSUO WAS LITTLE, ALL HE DID WAS DRAW MANGA ALL THE TIME.
IT WAS A BIG WORRY FOR OUR MOTHER.
BUT I NEVER IMAGINED HE WOULD COME OUT AND SAY HE WANTED TO BE A MANGA ARTIST!
COULD YOU...
...PLEASE STOP.
SO... HOW IS HE? DO YOU THINK MITSUO CAN DRAW MANGA?
ERR...
...WELL, HAMAGUCHI HAS ONLY JUST JOINED US,...
PLEASE, BROTHER, TRY TO MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS.
...BUT HE TAKES THE WORK SERIOUSLY, AND HIS ART'S GOTTEN GOOD...
...SO HE'LL BE FINE, DON'T YOU THINK?
IS THAT SO?
WELL, IN THE END, IT DEPENDS ON THE EFFORTS OF THE INDIVIDUAL.
I was constantly on edge as to what my brother would blab about next.
IT'S A LUCKY THING YOU CAME HERE, ISN'T IT, HAMAGUCHI?
MR. KONDO IS A TOP CLASS MANGAKA.
IS HE NOW?

IT'S AN INCREDIBLE PLACE TO LEARN.
YES, I THINK SO TOO.
MR. KONDO IS BRILLIANT AT BOTH ART AND CREATING STORIES.
YOU THINK SO TOO...
...DON'T YOU, FUJITA?
OH...
...YES!
HOW WONDERFUL.
DOING WHAT YOU LOVE FOR WORK.
SOUNDS IDYLLIC!
THEY SAY YOU CAN'T DO THIS IF YOU DON'T LOVE IT.
WHOA!
WHAT AN INCREDIBLE NUMBER OF BOOKS.
DOES MR. KONDO ACTUALLY READ...
...ALL OF THESE?

11:30 P.M.
The pages were finally completed.
OKAY!
GOOD WORK, EVERYONE!
URRR!
SO SLEEPY.
Somehow we'd avoided working all night over the past few days but we'd only slept four or five hours at most.
THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR EVERYTHING TODAY.
I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN IN THE WAY OF YOUR WORK, FOR WHICH I APOLOGIZE.
NO!
IT WOULD'VE BEEN GOOD IF MR. KONDO HAD BEEN HERE.
YES.
GIVE MR. KONDO MY BEST REGARDS, PLEASE.
INCIDENTALLY, ABOUT TONIGHT? WHERE WILL YOUR BROTHER BE STAYING?
OH, I HADN'T ASKED, BUT...!
OH, SORRY...
...I WAS THINKING I WOULD STAY WITH YOU, MITSUO. CAN'T WE DO THAT?
HUH?

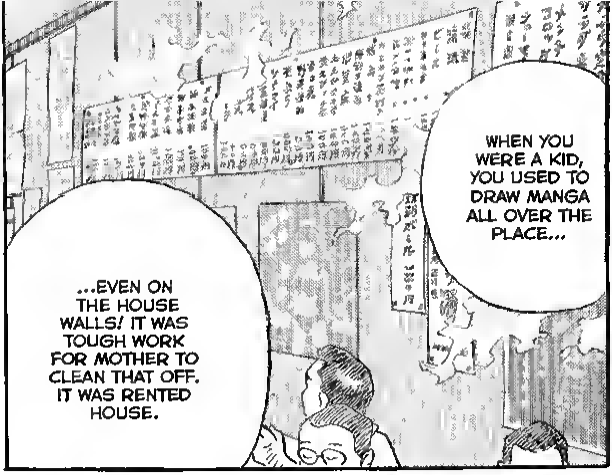

OH... IN THAT CASE, I CAN SLEEP HERE.
THAT WOULD BE KIND.
IT IS THE FIRST TIME HE'S SEEN HIS BROTHER IN A YEAR.
WE'LL PUT THE BROTHERS TOGETHER.
MINE'S A FOUR-AN-A-HALF TATAMI* DUMP, BUT NOT TO WORRY, RIGHT?
THEY'VE PROBABLY GOT TONS TO TALK ABOUT.
OR YOU CAN COME TO MY PLACE, FUJITA.
HUH?
ARE YOU SURE?

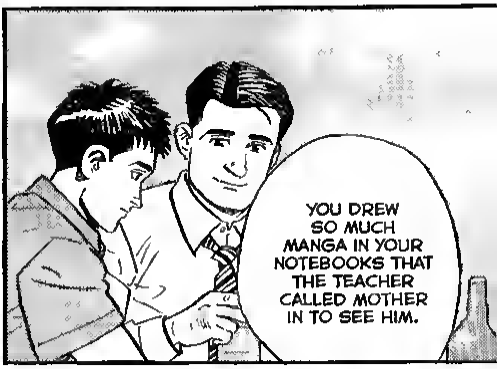
*TATAMI (LIT. FOLDED AND PILED) IS A MAT MEASURING APPROX 90X180CMS (3'X6')



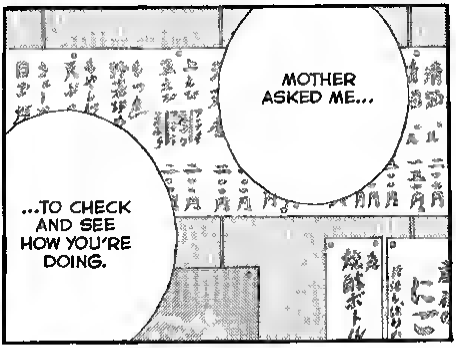
MMM!
THIS IS ONE DELICIOUS HOT POT!
It was gone midnight when my brother and I finally left the studio.
HUH?
...HERE, HAVE A DRINK YOURSELF.
MITSUO ...

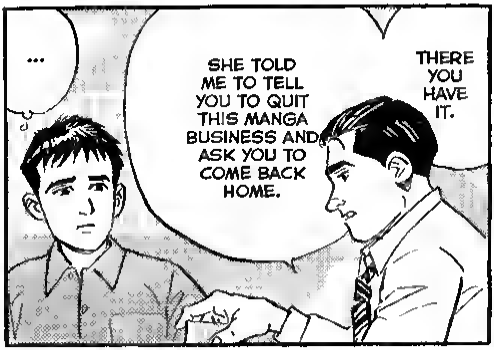
I KNOW.
YOU COULD HAVE AT LEAST TALKED TO US ABOUT IT.
YOU WORRY OUR MOTHER TOO MUCH. SHE'S UP IN YEARS NOW YOU KNOW.
YOU WENT AND QUIT YOUR JOB OUT OF NOWHERE.
TO BE A MANGA ARTIST OF ALL THINGS.
...
MNCH
ANYBODY WILL TELL YOU, IT'S NOT THAT EASY A THING TO DO.
THEY WANT THEIR KIDS TO GET INTO A SECURE, STABLE JOB.
SO IT'S A NATURAL THING FOR A PARENT TO WORRY.
GOT TO THINK OF HER AS WELL.
GULP
IS IT TRUE BROTHER...
...THAT YOU WANTED TO BECOME AN ARTIST?
YES, BUT SO MANY THINGS CAME UP.
THERE'S NO WAY I WOULD'VE BEEN ABLE TO EARN A LIVING PAINTING PICTURES.
I WOULD HAVE LOVED TO GIVE IT A TRY.
...MAKES YOU THINK.
BACK THEN, I WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO LEAVE YOU AND OUR MOTHER AND MOVE TO TOKYO.
STILL YOU, A MANGAKA...

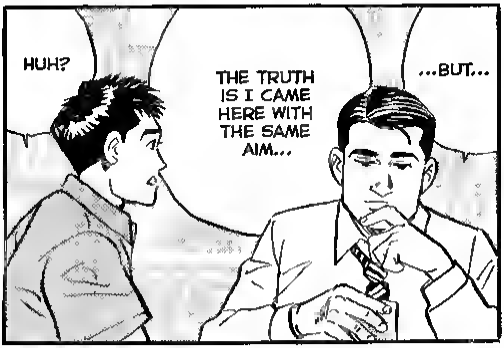

WHEN YOU WERE A KID, YOU USED TO DRAW MANGA ALL OVER THE PLACE...
...EVEN ON THE HOUSE WALLS! IT WAS TOUGH WORK FOR MOTHER TO CLEAN THAT OFF. IT WAS RENTED HOUSE.

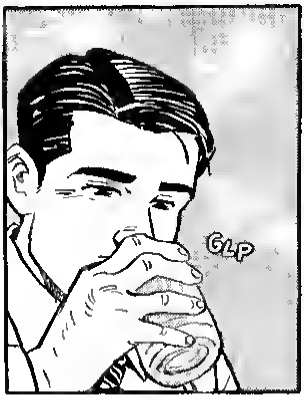

YOU DREW SO MUCH MANGA IN YOUR NOTEBOOKS THAT THE TEACHER CALLED MOTHER IN TO SEE HIM.

YUP.
I REMEMBER THAT.


MOTHER ASKED ME...
...TO CHECK AND SEE HOW YOU'RE DOING.

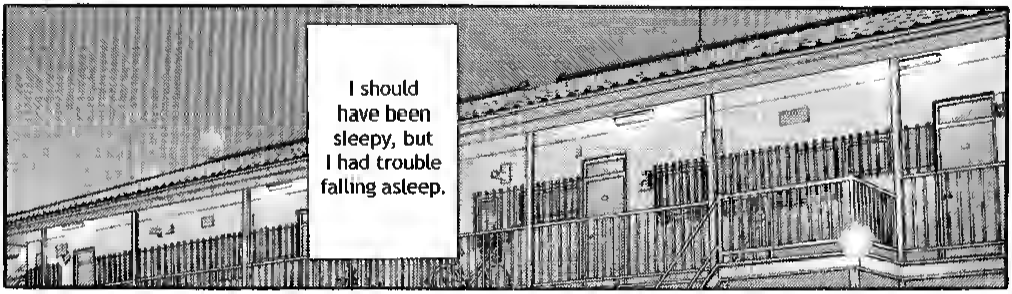

...
SHE TOLD ME TO TELL YOU TO QUIT THIS MANGA BUSINESS AND ASK YOU TO COME BACK HOME.
THERE YOU HAVE IT.

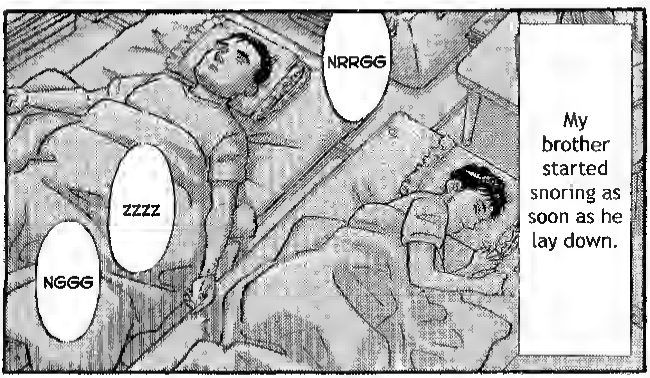

HUH?
THE TRUTH IS I CAME HERE WITH THE SAME AIM...
...BUT...


GLP

MAYBE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO FEED YOURSELF AS A MANGA ARTIST.
...NOW I'M NOT SO SURE.

When we got back to the apartment, it was about to turn 2:00 A.M.
THIS IS THE PLACE HE RENTS FOR US.
FUJITA AND I LIVE HERE TOGETHER.
I SEE.
I'M SORRY FOR PUTTING HIM OUT. COULD YOU APOLOGIZE TO HIM LATER FOR ME?
YEAH.
IT'S GOOD, ISN'T IT?
...
YOU'RE ABLE TO DO WHAT YOU LIKE EVEN IF THERE ISN'T MUCH MONEY IN IT.
MITSUO ...
CHAK
...YOU HAVE TOMORROW OFF, DON'T YOU?
UH HUH.
FOR TWO DAYS.
WELL, THEN, WOULD YOU COME SIGHTSEEING WITH ME?
I WAS THINKING I'D LIKE TO GO UP TOKYO TOWER.
SURE.
THAT'D BE FINE.

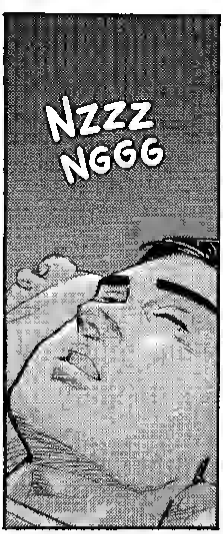

I should have been sleepy, but I had trouble falling asleep.


NRRGG
ZZZZ
NGGG
My brother started snoring as soon as he lay down.

But... to think my brother wanted to be an artist.

I had no idea.

Had my brother sacrificed his own dreams for the sake of me and my mother?

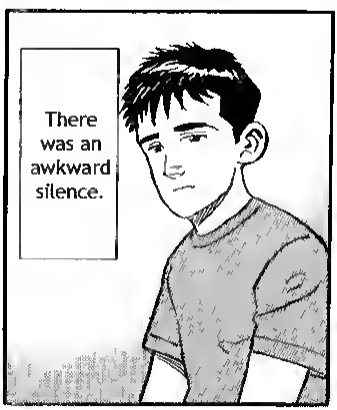

NZZZ
NGGG

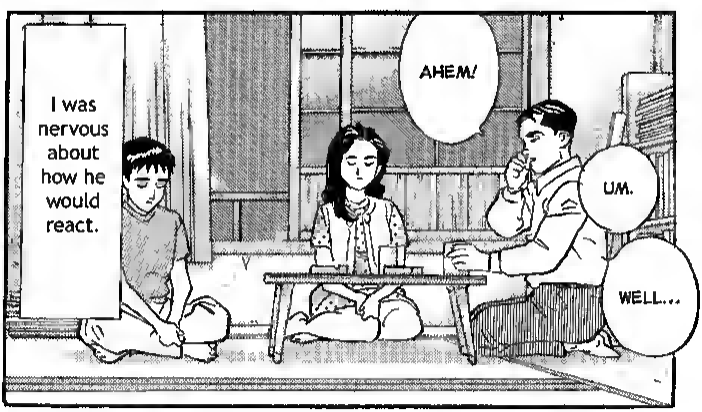
NNRRG
NZZZ

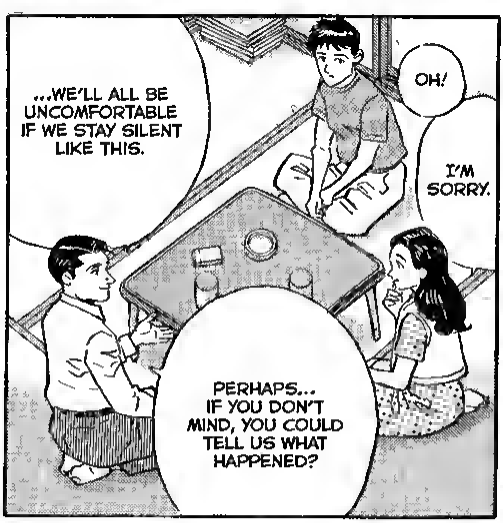
BOM BOM BOM
Then, when I had finally dozed off...!
HRR.
UHH.
HEY! YOU IN THERE? OPEN UP!
WHO?
KCHAK
OH!
MR. KIKUCHI!
YO!
HEY,...
...COULD YOU SHELTER THIS GIRL FOR A BIT?
HUH?!
WH... WHY?
DON'T WORRY. IT'LL ONLY BE ABOUT AN HOUR.
BUT...
...RIGHT NOW... MY BROTHER IS...!
MITSUO.
LET HER STAY HERE.
OKAY.

YOUR FRIEND HAS A PROBLEM, DOESN'T HE?
BIG BROTHER.
OH, SORRY!
YOU HAVE A GUEST.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
I'M MITSUO'S BROTHER.
I'M SORRY FOR THIS.
SO, CAN YOU HELP US OUT?
WE UNDERSTAND. SHE IS WELCOME TO STAY.
PLEASE COME IN.
EXCUSE ME.
OKAY, TAKE CARE OF HER, KID.
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
BTAM
...
MITSUO, LET'S PUT AWAY THE FUTONS.
DO YOU HAVE CUSHIONS TO SIT ON?
NO.
NONE AT ALL.

SIPPP


There was an awkward silence.


I was nervous about how he would react.
AHEM!
UM.
WELL...

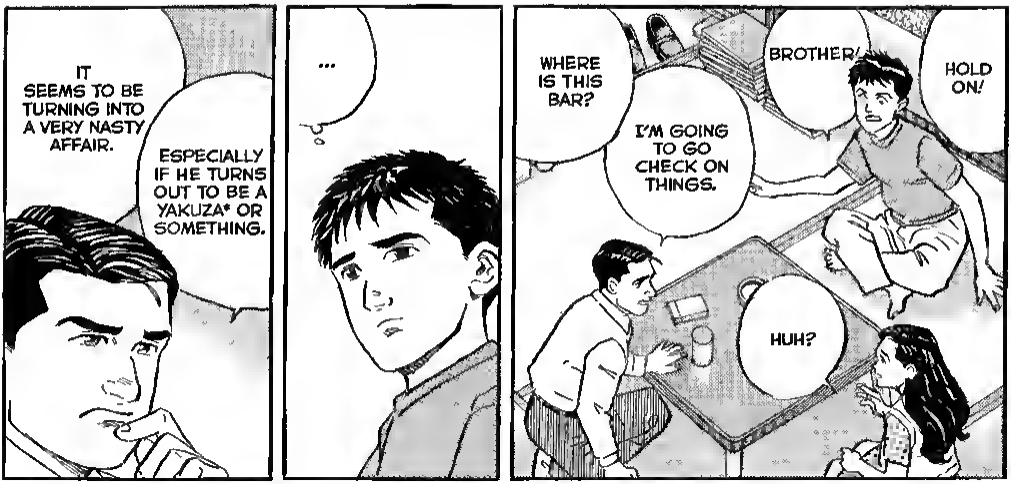

...WE'LL ALL BE UNCOMFORTABLE IF WE STAY SILENT LIKE THIS.
OH!
I'M SORRY.
PERHAPS... IF YOU DON'T MIND, YOU COULD TELL US WHAT HAPPENED?

ACTUALLY ...
...I DON'T REALLY KNOW THAT MAN.

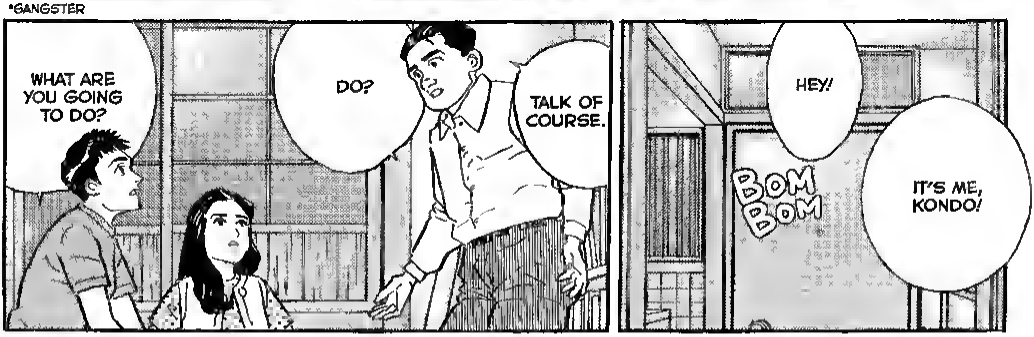
PARDON?

So she told us what had happened that night.
HEY, BARTENDER!
YOU STILL OPEN?
OH, MR. KONDO.
IT'S FINE, COME ON IN
CLAK
I'VE HAD ENOUGH!
I'M LEAVING!
LEAVING WHERE?!
DO YOU HAVE ANY PLACE TO GO?!
HANG ON!
CHIKA!
...?
I'LL BE FINE. LEAVE ME ALONE.
IS SOME-THING WRONG?
NO.
IT'S NOTHING.
CHIKA, WAIT A MINUTE. WE'LL GO TOGETHER.
I'LL CLOSE UP THE BAR.
WHOA, WHOA! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

TELL US WHAT'S UP.
WE STILL WANT A DRINK.
WELL.
I'M SORRY FOR THIS.
SHE CAME OUT TO TOKYO LURED BY SOME "FRIEND"...
...BUT SHE SAYS SHE WAS DECEIVED, AND IT LOOKS LIKE THINGS ARE GOING TO GET UGLY.
SO SHE'S FLED FROM HIM AND COME HERE.
THIS IS MY NIECE.
SHE RAN AWAY FROM HOME.
SO I'VE BEEN LECTURING HER, TRYING TO TELL HER TO GO BACK TO HER PARENTS.
HE... HE MAY COME HERE, HE...
...HE KNOWS THIS BAR.
...
While they were talking the man showed up.
SO...
...THEY TOLD ME IT'S BEST IF I'M NOT IN THE BAR WHILE THEY SETTLE THINGS.


IT SEEMS TO BE TURNING INTO A VERY NASTY AFFAIR.
ESPECIALLY IF HE TURNS OUT TO BE A YAKUZA* OR SOMETHING.
...
WHERE IS THIS BAR?
I'M GOING TO GO CHECK ON THINGS.
BROTHER!
HOLD ON!
HUH?

*GANGSTER


WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
DO?
TALK OF COURSE.
HEY!
BOM BOM
IT'S ME, KONDO!

KCHAK
HELLO ...
...MR. KONDO.
...
HEY.
WE'VE TALKED TO THE GUY.
CHIKA, YOU GO ON BACK TO YOUR UNCLE.
OH... UH...
...MISTER... KONDO?

PLEASED TO MEET YOU.
OH.
THIS IS MY BIG BROTHER.
HUH?
YOUR BRO-THER?
HE CAME TO VISIT ME AT THE STUDIO WITHOUT WARNING...
...JUST AFTER YOU WENT OUT.
OH, IS THAT SO?
WELL, SORRY 'BOUT ALL THIS.
AHAHA!
YOU MUST BE SHOCKED, HUH?
NOT AT ALL!
SEEING THIS CRAZY LIFESTYLE.
IT'S BEEN A FASCINATING EXPERIENCE.
IF YOU'RE UP FOR IT, HOW ABOUT COMING FOR A DRINK?
THE BAR'S STILL OPEN.
IS IT?
THEN I'D BE HAPPY TO.
ARE YOU SURE, BROTHER?
YES.
MR. KONDO'S KIND ENOUGH TO INVITE US, AFTER ALL.
I was so sleepy.

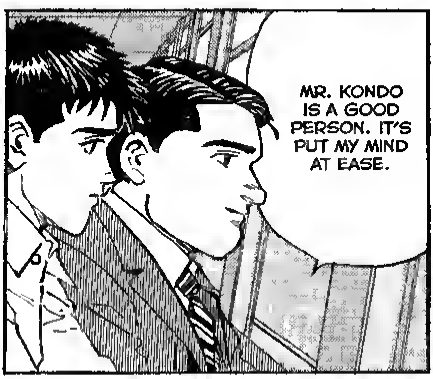
It was an odd situation somehow. It was the first time I'd seen my brother like this.
He had always been deeply serious and hated loose behavior more than anything.
GODDAMN!
AHA-HAHA!
I JUST BULL-HEADEDLY STUCK MY NOSE IN IT WITHOUT THINKING!
NO, NO. THAT WAS A BIG THING YOU DID, MR. KIKUCHI.
YOU SEE, THIS HERE'S A SENTIMENTAL FELLOW.
HE GETS LIKE THAT AT THE DROP OF A HAT.
BUT HOW COULD YOU STAND FOR IT? HE WAS LIKE A PIMP, THAT BASTARD!
"A WOMAN NEEDS TO BE PROTECTED BY HER MAN"...
...HE SAYS, PREACHING TO THE GUY.
CRACKED ME UP THOUGH.
I WAS ON EDGE THINKING IT WAS GOING TO COME TO BLOWS.

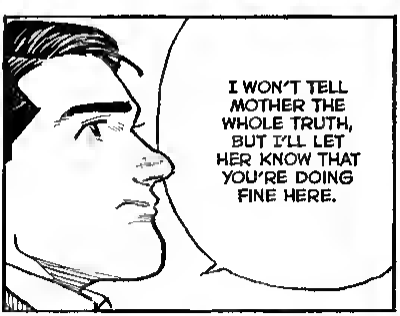
WELL, THANK GOODNESS HE WASN'T A YAKUZA AT LEAST.
YEAH, SO WE WERE ABLE TO *TALK* HIM ROUND.
I DON'T WANT TO GO BACK HOME.
SO...
... I'LL BE LOOKING AFTER HER FOR A WHILE.
OH, GOOD.
THIS PLACE IS DEVOID OF ANY FEMININE TOUCH.
SO WHAT...
...IS SHE GOING TO DO?
YOU'D BETTER WATCH YOUR BACK, EH, CHIKA.
PLENTY OF DANGEROUS TYPES FREQUENT THIS PLACE.
PLEASE DON'T SCARE ME LIKE THAT.
AND THE MOST DANGEROUS ONE IS YOU KIKUCHI, RIGHT?
HEH HEH.
BINGO!
CHIKA.
I'LL TAKE YOU OUT IN SHINJUKU NEXT TIME.
THIS IS...
...FREEDOM, ISN'T IT?
GLUP
HM?
HUH?

LIVING SIMPLY...
...IN TUNE WITH YOUR FEELINGS.
AHAHAHA
THAT'S HAPPINESS.
YOU KNOW, I'VE REALLY ENJOYED MYSELF TODAY.
YOU'VE GOT A GREAT BIG BROTHER...
...EH, KID?
HUH?
DID HE GO CRASH OUT ON US?
...
MITSUO'S STILL A KID.
HHH.
HHHN.

The next day, I went to Tokyo Tower with my brother.
WHAT A VIEW!
MMM, YEAH!

IT SEEMS LIKE A REALLY GOOD PLACE YOUR STUDIO.
HM?


MR. KONDO IS A GOOD PERSON. IT'S PUT MY MIND AT EASE.


I WON'T TELL MOTHER THE WHOLE TRUTH, BUT I'LL LET HER KNOW THAT YOU'RE DOING FINE HERE.

AND AS LONG AS YOU'RE HERE MITSUO...
...I CAN HAVE AN EXCUSE TO VISIT TOKYO.

I WILL.
YOU GIVE IT YOUR ALL.